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# OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM IN NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT

BY

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## P R E F A C E

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EARLY in 1903 a request was made to the writer, as a Senior Missionary and one whose special work has been connected with Bible revision and Christian literature in Bengali, that he should deliver an address before the Bengali Christian Conference of Calcutta, on the modern phase of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament. The address was embodied in a booklet published in India. The present volume grew out of this booklet, and has been specially prepared with a view to the general reader.

It has been difficult to find a suitable phrase to express the modern views which we have to consider. Higher Criticism is in itself a good thing; it aims at finding out the truth as to the Bible, and it is awkward to use it as a synonym for views which those who oppose them deem to be really *uncritical*, based on subjective theories rather than on objective fact, and creating far greater difficulties than those which they were



framed to meet. At the same time 'higher criticism' is the popular term for these views, and covers a wide extent of varying opinion, held by pronounced evangelical theologians at one end, and by men who deny many of the leading verities of the gospel at the other end. We seem, therefore, bound to use the word *criticism* to express the new views; but if we simply do this, it implies that those who are opposed to these views are opposed to criticism itself; whereas we maintain firmly that ~~true~~ criticism is a good thing. The only way out of the difficulty seems to be to put the words *critics* and *criticism* in inverted commas; 'criticism' is therefore in this book used to denote the new views, and 'critics' to denote the men who hold them.

The quotation marks are not used to imply disparagement, but for the sake of identification, in order to distinguish one class of critics from other classes. We thankfully acknowledge the help rendered by many of the present school of critics towards the understanding of the Bible as it stands. The Oxford Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon now nearing completion is of great value to Old Testament students, and so are many of the commentaries on different books written by these scholars, which contain much that is very valuable apart from that which is matter of dispute. It has been well said that 'the so-

called higher critics have won the position of worthily occupying the very front rank of workers in the field of the lower criticism, where all learners must begin.'

For convenience' sake we use the term 'traditionalist' to represent those who take the old view. It has been given us by our adversaries, and there is probably in it an element of contempt, as implying that we blindly follow tradition. But, as the Early Church accepted ~~the~~ nickname 'Christian,' we may accept the term 'traditionalist,' because we seek, in regard to the Old Testament, as in everything else, to 'hold the traditions which we were taught, whether by word' of Christ, 'or by epistle of' His Apostles (2 Thess. ii. 15).

- Limited space has compelled the writer to omit many points which might have been referred to; but his aim has been to select the points which seem most important, and the arguments which seem most forcible on the 'critical' side.

The words 'In New Testament Light' do not mean that we examine *only* the New Testament teaching on the subject, but that we endeavour to examine the questions before us critically, on this basis, that nothing which is contrary to the New Testament is true. We quote the authority of scholars, but we regard the teaching of Christ and His Apostles as higher authority than that of all the scholars in the world.

## PREFACE

It has been our endeavour to deal with those from whom we differ in the spirit of Christian charity, and to use only fair and calm argument. We trust, however, that we may be pardoned if some feeling has been manifested when combating the position that sinful, erring men can correct the 'mistakes' of their Lord and Saviour, or that the Great Teacher 'accommodated' Himself to the errors of men in a way which His true followers would shrink from doing.

The quotations from the Bible are taken from the American Revised Bible issued in 1901. The reader will be able to compare the renderings with those of the English A.V. or R.V. when he wishes.

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# Old Testament Criticism in New Testament Light

## CHAPTER I

### Preliminary Considerations

**U**N<sup>T</sup>IL recently the view held by the great majority of Evangelical Christians in regard to the Bible was that it is a truthful narrative from beginning to end, and that its religious teaching is infallibly true, the book being really the 'Word of God.' Some Christians thought that there were a few minor mistakes in regard to unimportant details in the narrative, but for the most part Christians regarded the narrative, as well as the doctrinal teaching, as being absolutely without any mistake.

Within the last twenty years a great change has taken place, and a considerable number of Christian teachers have come to entertain very

## OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

different views. These are generally called the 'Higher Critics.' The extreme party among these hold views in regard to Christ which seem to be subversive of real faith in Him. We who still hold to Christ as 'the Son of God, the Saviour of the world,' can have nothing to do with this extreme party; we know Christ too well to listen for a moment to any opinions which would subvert our faith in Him. But there are many true believers whose views in regard to the Bible have very largely changed within the last few years; and these new opinions have so widely spread that many Christians are getting troubled about them, and are beginning to ask whether the very foundations of the faith are not being undermined.

In considering this matter, a few preliminary points may first be considered.

**Christ, not  
the Bible,<sup>1</sup>  
is our  
Rock.** 1. The existence of a divinely inspired, infallible book, in which there are no mistakes, is not the foundation upon which our faith rests. On the Day of Pentecost, when three thousand persons became believers in Christ, there was no New Testament at all. When Abraham 'believed in Jehovah, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness,' when he thus became the 'father of the faithful' in such a high sense, that all the salvation which comes through Christ is summed up in the phrase 'being blessed with the faithful Abraham,'<sup>1</sup> there was neither Old Testament nor New in

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xv. 6; Gal. iii. 9.

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

existence. It is clear, therefore, that salvation does not depend upon the possession of an infallibly inspired record. Such a record would be a great help to faith, but it is not essential to it; it is but an outpost, the citadel is Christ Himself. If we take the Gospels as substantially a true narrative, in the same sense in which a History of England is true—and on all principles of historic evidence we are authorised to do this—we have enough ground on which to build our faith in Christ as the Divine Saviour of men. Add to this the facts of Christian experience, the felt presence of the indwelling Christ, the felt power of the indwelling Spirit, and the reality of personal fellowship with God in prayer. With all this we have quite enough to assure us that in resting on Christ we are building on the Rock of Ages. We may, therefore, pursue our investigations as to the Bible without any fear that our faith in Christ will be shaken by them; provided only we hold fast to the teaching of Christ Himself with regard to the Old Testament, as with regard to everything else.

2. In the interpretation of Scripture, the human side must be the first side that we look at. The first thing to find out is, what the author meant by what he said; the next thing to inquire is, what God, who inspired the writer, meant to teach by the words which His inspiration led the writer to pen. The latter is the more important point,

**The human and the Divine side of the Bible.**

#### 4 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

but it will not be properly grasped unless we look first at the less important one, the meaning of the writer. It is quite true that the writers of the Bible were sometimes so led by the Spirit of God that they uttered words, the full meaning of which they themselves did not understand.<sup>1</sup> The writers of Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii., for instance, could never have understood the full import of their words. Still, our first aim in the interpretation of any passage must be to ascertain what was the writer's meaning. Formerly, Christians paid too little attention to this matter, and modern criticism has done good in laying stress upon it. By 'modern criticism' we do not here mean exclusively the writings of what are now popularly called the 'Higher Critics.' No one has brought out the human side of the Bible more graphically than Dean Stanley did fifty years ago, and many other writers followed his lead in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, which came out ten years later.

But while the human side of Scripture is the first thing that we should consider, it is by no means the last or the chief thing. Herein lies the fallacy of the common dictum, that we should 'treat the Bible like any other book.' On its *human* side the Bible is like any other book, and we should treat it as such. But it has a *divine* side in a sense which no other book in the world has. This is proved by the use made of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10-12.

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS 5

the Old Testament by our Lord and His Apostles, and the divine authority which they attributed to it. In this respect it differs from all other books, and to treat alike things that differ is not *critical* in the true sense of the word.

For instance, it is one of the principles of the new school that if we see in any book a reference to a certain event, the book must have been written subsequently to that event. This is true in regard to all merely human books, written by men who know nothing of the future; but it is not necessarily true of a book which was written under the special inspiration of Him who knows the end from the beginning. It is also uncritical to say that no passage of the Bible can mean more than the writer understood it to mean. Even apart from special divine inspiration, a great thinker or poet will often use words the full meaning of which he does not at the time grasp; and still more is this true of the men who 'spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.'<sup>1</sup> Our first question in reading the Bible should be, What did the writer mean? But the second and more important is, What did God intend to teach by the words which His Spirit led the man to use?

In regard to both the written and the living 'Word of God,' the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ, we have learnt much during the last

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. i. 21.



century. A hundred years ago the human side of each was so much obscured by the divine as to make the picture which Christians formed of each one-sided. Now we have learnt to see more clearly the human side, and have gained much thereby. But the pendulum seems to have swung too much in the other direction, and the tendency is to look so much from the human point of view as to neglect the divine aspect. We all need to be on our guard in this matter. Much the same may be said in regard to the place which God takes in the Bible. Formerly the tendency was to see as much of the miraculous as possible in the Bible narrative; now the tendency is to explain everything on human lines as far as we can. Here, also, the wise course is to take the golden mean, to see the human element where it exists, but at the same time to have no hesitation in recognising the supernatural, where the plain meaning of the text seems to imply it.

**Scripture  
must be in-  
terpreted  
rationally.**

3. Scripture must be interpreted rationally. Formerly it was looked upon too much as a mere collection of proof-texts. Any passage from any writer, or even as spoken by any person referred to by such writer, apart from its special meaning as shown by the context—the utterance of Job's friends, who had 'not spoken . . . the thing that is right,'<sup>1</sup> as much as the utterance of the prophet who penned Isa. liii.—was often brought forward as

<sup>1</sup> Job xlii. 8.

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

being the word of God Himself, to establish a New Testament theological dogma. Modern critics have helped to correct this mistake. We ought first to look at what we read from the human point of view, to treat it as we should any other book, in the respect in which it is like other books. We must first interpret the meaning of all sentences in the light of the context. But we must not, as many critics so often do, *stop* there; we must go on to the chief thing, and inquire what message for all time God has in them.

We must also remember that the books of the Bible are written in popular language, and we must not press their literal meaning as if they were part of an Act of Parliament or of a scientific treatise. If we do not accuse an almanac of being unscientific because it speaks of the sun rising and setting, we must not condemn the Bible as being scientifically inaccurate because it does the same thing. Many of the objections brought against the accuracy of the Bible are of this class. The Bible is written in popular language, for the practical guidance of plain men for this life and for the life to come; and all our interpretations ought to keep in view this fact.

We must further remember that the Bible, while in one sense a 'book,' is, in another sense, a 'library,' containing a large number of different books, of different kinds, both prose and poetry. We do not interpret the History of England

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and *Paradise Lost* on the same principles; we recognise that one is plain narrative, the other is majestic poetry. For the same reason we should not interpret Genesis and Job on the same lines.

From the human side each book of the Bible should be interpreted on the same lines as those on which we should interpret any secular book of the same class, regarding simple narrative as probably to be interpreted literally, and sublime poetry as having probably a large element of the figurative in it.

We should also remember that we have in the Bible figures of speech, and these must be interpreted as they usually are in common literature. Thus we have in the Bible *sarcasm*, in which a person says the very opposite of the truth. When Paul said to the Corinthians, 'Ye are filled, ye are become rich, ye have come to reign without us . . . ye are wise,'<sup>1</sup> he meant that this was just what they were *not*, though they thought they were. Here, again, we must not press words to their *literal* meaning.

We have in the Bible *hyperbole*, where a person uses exaggerated statements, which the hearers or readers of the time knew to be such; and we must not accuse the writers of making mistakes in such a case, any more than we accuse a person of falsehood when he says, 'I will be out in a moment,' and really it is half a minute before he

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 8, 10.

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS '9

comes out. Yet here again the Bible has often been treated unfairly, mathematical exactness being demanded by objectors.

We have *poetry* in the Bible, and this also has often been pressed to its literal meaning in order to prove that the Bible makes mistakes. When Milton sings, 'And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,' no one takes it literally. Why, then, should we press the literal meaning of such phrases as, 'Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain, who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters,'<sup>1</sup> and so forth? Yet passages like these have been brought forward to show the scientific inaccuracy of the Bible and the mistaken ideas of its writers. Whether the writers believed these words to be literally true or not we do not know; but we have nothing to do with that, we have only to do with what the book *says*, and to interpret that fairly and rationally. The sacred writers have actually been charged with believing and teaching that the heaven above us is a solid mass, because of the word 'firmament' in Gen. i. 6. As a matter of fact, the idea of 'firmness' is only in the English, Latin, and Greek translations of Genesis; in the original Hebrew it does not occur at all. Some critics have taken the Bible expressions literally, and have based on them a statement as to the scientific beliefs of the Hebrews. It would be just as rational for a fortieth century

<sup>1</sup> Ps. civ. 2, 3.

## OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

critic to take *Paradise Lost* literally, and base on this literal interpretation a statement of the scientific beliefs of the English at the time of Milton.

The Bible  
is not in-  
tended to  
teach  
science or  
history.

4. The only object of the Bible is to give religious teaching. Whether its science and history are inerrant or not, its *object* is not to teach science or history, but only to give religious teaching, and thus to make known the way of salvation. This seems a self-evident truth, and has always been maintained by intelligent Christians. It has latterly been sometimes assumed that those who hold to the old views in regard to the Bible need to be taught this ; but we all of us acknowledge the fact, even if we regard the Bible as being accurate on *all* points. A preacher may use scientific illustrations in a sermon, but his object is not to teach science, but to enforce religious truth by scientific similes.

True  
criticism  
does good.

5. We need have no fear as to the results of *true criticism* of the Bible. The Bible courts the light, and the more the light shines on it the brighter will the Book shine. It is no hot-house plant that must be sheltered from the winds of heaven. It needs no favour, and it asks for none. All criticism in the past, whether friendly or unfriendly, has only resulted in bringing out new beauties in the Bible, and in clearing away the mists of false interpretation on the part of Christians, which had more or less concealed the

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS 1

real glory of the Book. We welcome the fullest and the freest criticism, the more of it the better; and let it be criticism that looks at the Book from all sides. When the nebula of present criticism has settled down into a mass of solid fact, we shall find ourselves all the richer because of it, and the Bible will become a grander book even than it was before. We thank God that all believing critics see God in the Old Testament, preparing the way for Christ, with as much confidence as do those who hold the old doctrine.

## CHAPTER II

### Our Basis—Christ made no Mistakes

**I**N our consideration of the matter it is essential that we lay down right principles. The remarks which will follow are based on this foundation, that *Christ made no mistakes*.

He is THE TRUTH, and all that He believed and taught is true. It is very strange and sad that we should have to argue such a point as this, when dealing with fellow believers, but there are believing 'critics' who maintain that Christ was liable to embrace some of the current beliefs of the age, even when untrue; and that in one definite point, the authorship of Psalm cx., He believed what was untrue and stated what was untrue! This opinion is based upon what is called the doctrine of the *kenosis*—that is, the self-emptying of Christ in His incarnation, according to the words in the Revised Version of Phil. ii. 7, where it is said that Christ '*emptied Himself*.' It is held that this meant that He became liable to entertain the erroneous beliefs which were customary in His day. But this by no means follows from

Christ  
'emptied  
Himself.'  
-

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 13

the use of the word. The emptying cannot be absolute ; for, if it were, Christ would have been a mere man.

In the life of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, His divinity, even when upon earth, comes out as clearly as His humanity. If we look at the context in Phil. ii. we see that the chief point which the Apostle urges seems to have been that Christ emptied Himself of His *glory*; He 'counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,' etc. The phrase, 'emptied Himself' means that Christ, to a certain extent, veiled the attributes of the Deity when He became man. For instance, God is omnipotent, Christ for a time laid aside this attribute and became a helpless babe. God is omnipresent, and Christ, in His human, bodily, nature, was confined to one locality at a time. God is omniscient, and Christ so far laid aside this omniscience that He had to acquire knowledge like other children; He '*advanced* in wisdom'<sup>1</sup> and therefore did not know everything at the beginning; and in the course of His ministry He said, 'Of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . neither the Son.'<sup>2</sup> Christ, therefore, so far veiled His Deity that there was at least one thing which He did not know. But it by no means follows from this that He believed some things which were not true. To

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiii. 32.



## 14 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

say that He did not know all truth is one thing ; to say that in some respects He believed in what was false is a very different thing, which by no means follows from the other. To 'empty' a vessel means to pour out the water which is in it, it does not mean to mix some dirty water with the clean.

How it is possible for the Omniscient to lay aside His omniscience is to us an insoluble mystery ; but we may see something analogous to it in our own experience. When Sir Isaac Newton was enjoying a sound, dreamless sleep, did he at that moment know mathematics ? In one sense, Yes ; in another sense, No. The knowledge was there, but it was latent. When people have been saved from death by drowning, they have testified that in a minute almost all the events of their life seemed to rush through their memory, even things which had long seemed forgotten. We learn from this that in their ordinary life the events were really in their memory, but they were latent till the occasion called them forth. It is possible that in some such sense as ~~this~~ the divine omniscience was latent even in the infant Jesus ; in its being *latent* He 'emptied Himself.' But when our knowledge is thus latent, it does not permit of our believing what is contrary to that knowledge ; and so the 'emptying of Himself' on the part of Jesus did not imply that He could believe anything which in His latent omniscience He knew to be

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 15

untrue. Whether this illustration be apt or not, it is clear that Christ's 'emptying Himself' of the knowledge of all truth does not imply the liability of believing what is false. Not to know the whole truth is one thing, but to believe in an untruth is something very different; the first is simply a limitation of what is good, the second is the presence of what is bad. We may attribute the first to our Lord in the days of His humiliation; but to attribute the second to Him is a very serious matter.

The doctrine of the *kenosis*, therefore, by no means implies that Christ was liable to make mistakes. We next inquire, Is this liability probable, for other reasons?

Let us first take the lowest ground. Jesus lived in the land in which the Old Testament books were for the most part written; He knew well the country and its climate and the character and customs of the people; His surroundings were the surroundings of the Book; His mother tongue was closely akin to the language in which the Book was written; the Old Testament was venerated and studied by Him, all His life, as the Book of books. In these respects, therefore, He was likely to understand the Bible better than Western scholars, living 1,800 years later, amidst altogether different surroundings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Dr. Driver's *Daniel* (Cambridge Bible), p. lxxii., he refers to the mistakes which may be made by 'many

Christ was  
sinless.

Next, take higher ground : Christ was absolutely sinless. There is nothing which beclouds the intellect, and still more benumbs the feelings and the intuitive perceptions, like sin. From all these misleading influences Christ was perfectly free. He saw all things in the purest and clearest light. Even at the age of twelve the Jewish doctors were 'amazed at His understanding,'<sup>1</sup> and after that He still 'advanced in wisdom' as He had done before. He lived all His life in unbroken fellowship with His heavenly Father, who had Himself inspired the Old Testament writers.

Christ was  
filled with  
the Spirit  
of God.

Take higher ground still : He was the Incarnate Son of God, the 'Word of God' who had been 'with God' from the beginning and who 'was God.'<sup>2</sup> Old Testament prophecy had said of Him, 'The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding*, the spirit of *counsel* and might, the spirit of *knowledge* and of the fear of Jehovah.'<sup>3</sup> In accordance with this prophecy He had been at His baptism publicly anointed with the Holy Spirit, who was seen

expositors of Scripture, whose minds conspicuously lack that *orientation* which is an indispensable preliminary to a right understanding of the treasures of Eastern thought.' Is it not possible that our Lord and His Apostles, who needed no orientation because they were themselves Orientals, are more likely to have been correct in their understanding of Scripture than Western scholars of the present day? Especially when we remember how they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 47.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xi. 2.

## CHRIST MADE NO 'MISTAKES' 17

'descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon Him.'<sup>1</sup> From God, who 'giveth not the Spirit *by measure*,' He received all the fulness of that Spirit, in the perfect degree which was secured by His own capacity of reception, as the unique 'Son of God,' and by His absolute freedom from everything that would hinder the flow of the Spirit. The Spirit was given 'without measure' on the Father's part, and there was no limit to the reception of the Spirit on the Son's part. The Apostle John added the words, 'The same is He that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit'<sup>2</sup>—Jesus not only had the fulness of the Spirit Himself, but He was able, out of His abundant store, to baptize others also with the Holy Spirit. He said, 'I am . . . THE TRUTH'; 'My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me'; 'The Father that sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak'; 'The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.'<sup>3</sup> And shall we say of such a One that He, in any matter whatsoever, believed and said what was not true, and that we, mere sinful men, know better than He did, and can set Him right?

If we look at the Gospel record we shall find that there is nothing to imply that our Lord ever made a mistake, and that there is much to imply

**His teaching was God's teaching.**

**Christ's super-human knowledge when on earth.**

<sup>1</sup> John i. 32, 33, iii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> John vii. 16, xii. 49, xiv. 6, 24.

that He had superhuman knowledge even in the days of His humiliation on earth. It is said that the words, 'He marvelled because of their unbelief,'<sup>1</sup> imply that He expected His hearers to believe, but they did not believe, therefore He was mistaken. We reply that we often 'marvel' at what we know does happen. When we preach the gospel to a congregation of unconverted men, we know that many, perhaps all, will reject our message; and yet we never cease to *marvel* that even one sinner should reject such a Saviour. In the Gospel record we have the following instances of more than ordinary human knowledge in regard to earthly matters. His having noticed Nathanael under the fig-tree was to the latter so wonderful that it made him at once exclaim, 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel.'<sup>2</sup> His knowledge of the past life of the Samaritan woman was such as to make her at once believe Him to be a prophet.<sup>3</sup> He knew that the fish which Peter would catch in the water would have a coin in its mouth;<sup>4</sup> that there would be a colt tied at a particular place;<sup>5</sup> that the two disciples whom He sent would meet a man with a pitcher of water who was going to a particular house;<sup>6</sup> that a certain woman's two mites were all her living;<sup>7</sup> that Peter would deny Him thrice before the cock

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi. 6.<sup>2</sup> John i. 49.<sup>3</sup> John iv. 17-19.<sup>4</sup> Matt. xvii. 27.<sup>5</sup> Matt. xxi. 2.<sup>6</sup> Mark xiv. 13, 14.<sup>7</sup> Mark ii. 44.

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 19

crew twice.<sup>1</sup> We several times find that Jesus knew the thoughts of men, and we have the express statement, 'Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men, and because He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man.'<sup>2</sup>

We also find that our Lord, even in His humiliation, had knowledge of past and future events in a way which was superhuman. He says, 'Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.'<sup>3</sup> He said that 'if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in' Chorazin and Bethsaida, 'they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.'<sup>4</sup> This is stated not as a mere opinion, but in the tone of authority of one who knew that it was true. He spoke confidently about the future; He thrice foretold His sufferings, in detail, that the chief priests should deliver Him to the Gentiles, and that He should be mocked, scourged, spat upon, crucified, and should rise on the third day.<sup>5</sup> He knew that Judas would betray Him.<sup>6</sup> He knew that Lazarus had died and that He would raise him from the dead.<sup>7</sup> He expressly said to His disciples three times in His last discourse that He was telling them beforehand

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiv. 30

<sup>2</sup> John ii. 24, 25.

<sup>3</sup> John viii. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Luke x. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Mark x. 33, 34.

<sup>6</sup> John vi. 64, 70, 71.

<sup>7</sup> John xi. 11.

## 20 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

what was to come to pass.<sup>1</sup> This was not mere human foresight, but something so marked that the effect would be that they might 'believe' in Him. He speaks of the future destruction of Jerusalem, and of His own second coming; says that He is to be the Judge on the last day, and tells what He will then do and say.<sup>2</sup>

He also speaks in the most positive way about heavenly things. He declares of the man who commits a certain sin that 'he hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.'<sup>3</sup> In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man He to a certain extent removes the veil which hides the other world from us.<sup>4</sup> He tells Peter of the effort which Satan was making against him.<sup>5</sup> And He says that He knew the Father as fully as the Father knew Him. 'All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.'<sup>6</sup> These words imply that, even in the days of His humiliation on earth, the Son had an intimate knowledge of the Father, as no one else had; and that He Himself was so great that none but God the Father knew Him.

<sup>1</sup> John xiii. 19, xiv. 29, xvi. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vii. 22, 23, xxiv., xxv.; Luke xiii. 25-28.

<sup>3</sup> Mark iii. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xvi. 19-31.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xxii. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xi. 27.

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 21

Our Lord also speaks in no measured terms of His own greatness and authority. In the words, 'Before Abraham was born, I am,'<sup>1</sup> He shows that He was distinctly aware of the fact of His pre-existence thousands of years before the time at which He was speaking. Believing as we do that He was the Incarnate Son of God, we cannot conceive that He thought that He had been *created* at any definite time before then. The words practically imply a consciousness, even when He was on earth, of His existence from eternity. Again, the words, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there *am* I in the midst of them,'<sup>2</sup> betoken a certain kind of omnipresence and omniscience even when He was on earth: He does not speak of what *will be* after His exaltation, but of what was true even in the time of His humiliation.

Our Lord always spoke 'as one having authority.'<sup>3</sup> He never gives reasons for what He says, in order that His hearers may weigh the reasons and accept or reject His conclusions; but He prefaces His words again and again with 'I say unto you,'<sup>4</sup> sometimes commencing with a solemn 'Verily, verily'; and He calls upon His hearers to accept His words simply because He says them. When He appeals to any argument in confirmation of His utterances the very appeal

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xviii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. vii. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. v. 22, 28, 34; John v. 25, etc.



is significant and impressive; it is either by way of analogy—as in all His parabolic teaching, in which the inherent truth of His doctrine appears self-evident to every intelligent person—or else by way of divine testimony through His own miracles,<sup>1</sup> and through the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament, which He quotes as being, equally with His own words, the authoritative teaching of God. He says expressly, ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.’

It is noteworthy in this connection that our Lord never once expresses His *opinion*, or says that He *thinks* or *believes* this or that. His statements are always positive, even when dealing with the most mysterious subjects, past, present, or future—such as, ‘Before Abraham was born, I am.’ ‘I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father.’ ‘The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice [the voice of the Son of man] and shall come forth.’<sup>2</sup> If any ordinary man spoke in this positive way, never expressing a doubt of the truth of what he says, and expecting everybody to believe whatever he says just because he says it, we should feel him to be a man of unbearable conceit, and if in one or two points he should be proved to be mistaken,

<sup>1</sup> Mark ii. 8-11; John v. 36.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 58; Matt. xviii. 10; John v. 28.

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 23

we should look upon him with contempt. Yet all such confidence in the absolute truth of what he says seems perfectly natural in the case of Jesus; and in spite of it all we feel that He is quite true when He says, 'I am meek and lowly in heart.'<sup>1</sup>

But can we conceive it possible that so great a Being, the Incarnate Son of God, filled to the utmost capacity of His nature with the Spirit of God, who always speaks so positively in every one of His utterances, should make a mistake, and with all His positiveness should assert what is untrue, and thus 'appear as ignorant with that sort of ignorance which so profoundly impairs the whole value of a teacher—the ignorance of the man who does not know where his knowledge ends, and so makes confident affirmations, and draws confident inferences, where his basis as to facts is unsound'?<sup>2</sup> When he says in regard to the authorship of Ps. cx., 'David himself said in the Holy Spirit'<sup>3</sup>—that same Spirit with which Jesus Himself was filled, as no other man ever has been—and bases His argument on this very Davidic authorship, shall we dare to say that *He* was mistaken, because 'critics' of the present day—all of whom, even the most devoted Christians among them, have intellects clouded

Christ  
could, and  
did, reject  
surround-  
ing error.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Bp. Moule: Preface to *Bible and Modern Criticism*, by Sir R. Anderson.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xii. 36.

and spiritual sensibilities more or less benumbed by indwelling sin—think differently? Yet one of the most devout of the ‘critics,’ who writes strongly on behalf of the old Gospel, in an article a few years ago said that the traditional view of the Davidic authorship of that Psalm is ‘un-historical’ and ‘cannot be received,’ and yet ‘That He (Jesus) believed the Psalm to be written by David, I should think it impossible for any fair-minded reader to doubt. He lived in a world where there were not two opinions about the matter, and it is hardly exaggerating to say that it was part of His true humanity that He should think on such questions as others in His situation naturally thought.’ See what this leads to. The Davidic authorship of Ps. cx. was held universally for centuries, until at length some one was the first to contest it. This *some one* ‘lived in a world where there were not two opinions about the matter,’ he was certainly a sinful, erring man, and very possibly was an unbeliever, yet he was able to shake himself out of what the ‘critics’ consider the false views around him; but the sinless ‘Son of God,’ living in constant fellowship with the Father, filled with the ‘Spirit of truth,’ could not do so!

Furthermore, twenty or thirty years ago the ‘higher criticism’ was practically non-existent in Britain and America among Christians; so that every middle-aged ‘critic’ was brought up in

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 25

what he now regards as an environment of error, and has freed himself from it. If, therefore, he thinks that Christ could not free Himself from His environment, he practically makes himself superior to Christ; what he has done, his Lord and Master could not do!

As a matter of fact, Christ did free Himself from His false environment in many matters. He again and again attacked the false beliefs or practices of the Scribes and Pharisees of His day; and if their belief as to the origin of the Pentateuch or of Ps. cx. was false, filled as He was with the Spirit of God He would have rejected this false belief also.

It is said that the words 'neither the Son,' in Mark xiii. 32, prove that there are things of which our Lord could be ignorant when He was on earth. If the words be taken in their literal meaning it does prove this fact; but we have endeavoured to show that the negative fact, that our Lord did not know a certain truth, does not prove the statement that He might positively believe a certain untruth. Moreover, the passage would prove that our Lord was aware of His ignorance, where it existed, and therefore would be the less likely to be ignorant of His mistaken belief if He was really mistaken. Again, the statement that 'no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,' knew of the hour, implies that in the order of climax

Christ, on earth, was wiser than men or angels.

as to the knowledge of difficult matters, the angels are higher than men, and the Son, even when on earth, was higher than the angels.

If therefore a critic—that is, a man—expresses one opinion, and Jesus Christ on earth made a contrary assertion, we need not have much difficulty in deciding which is right. Again, Jesus said, 'Before Abraham was born, I am'; thus showing that even when on earth He was aware of His eternal pre-existence. He was the omniscient 'Word of God' in heaven all through the previous ages. If the 'critical' theory were true, when J, E, D, P, and the Redactors century after century were laboriously bringing out in fragments or in completed form the Pentateuch, and when some Unknown wrote Ps. cx., the omniscient 'Word of God' in heaven knew all about it. The Word becomes incarnate in Jesus Christ, and, marvellous to relate, the human mind of Christ, filled with the Spirit of God, believes the very opposite of what His divine nature *knows* to be true! The divine nature of our Lord knows all about what J, E, D, P, and R did to form the Pentateuch, and yet the human nature believes that Moses composed it. The divine nature knows that David did not write Ps. cx., and yet the human nature is confident that he did write it! Who can believe this to be true? Yet again, in Matt. xi. 27, we learn that our Lord had an intimate knowledge of the Eternal God; we ask,

## CHRIST MADE NO MISTAKES 27

Is He likely to have made a mistake on any purely earthly matter? We might apply the Saviour's own reasoning, 'Whether is easier, to know intimately the Infinite God, or to know who wrote a certain Psalm?' After speaking of His supreme knowledge of God, Jesus says to all, 'Learn of Me' (v. 29); the 'critic,' who maintains that Christ held a mistaken view as to the authorship of Ps. cx., instead of 'learning of' Christ, proceeds to teach Him, and to point out His mistake!

When Jesus says, 'My words shall not pass away,' 'The Father that sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak,' and other kindred statements, He makes no distinction between His words, but speaks of *all* of them as the word of God. If we are true disciples—*i.e.*, 'learners'—of Christ, we must accept His teaching 'all in all or not at all.' If we accept some of His words as true, and not others, we make *ourselves* the judge of what is true and what is false, instead of receiving all the words of Christ as true, just because He says them; we sit on the judgment-seat of our own opinion, and we arrange before us the statements of Christ, that *we* may decide which are right and which are wrong. He who thus *judges* the truthfulness of our Lord's words, and decides according to his own opinions, should remember His own solemn words: 'The word that I spake,

We must believe all Christ's words.

the same shall *judge him* in the last day.'<sup>1</sup> The way in which some 'critics' imply, or positively state, that our Lord made mistakes, seems to be the most serious attitude of the position they take. The sound heart of believing men may keep them firm in their allegiance to their Lord in spite of this view, but the average 'man in the street' will say, 'If Christ spoke of earthly things, such as the authorship of a Psalm, and made mistakes, how shall we believe Him when He speaks of heavenly things?'

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 48.

## CHAPTER III

### Christ's treatment of the Old Testament

WE lay down, then, this foundation upon which our consideration of the subject before us is based, CHRIST IS THE TRUTH. Of Him, as well as of the Father, it may be said, 'In Him is no darkness at all,'<sup>1</sup> whether the darkness take the form of sin or of error. Everything that He said is true, everything that is contrary to what He said must be untrue; it matters not what other people say or what arguments they bring, any argument which contradicts Christ's teaching is false, however specious, because He is THE TRUTH. We now inquire how Christ treated the Old Testament.

Many writers claim Jesus as a 'Critic,' because in His teaching He used the words, 'But I say unto you,' contrasting His words with those spoken 'of old.' Jesus was a *Critic* in the sense of being a *true Judge* of the Old Testament; but it by no means follows from this that He was a 'Higher Critic' in the sense of a believer

Christ a  
true critic.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 5.



in the Wellhausen theory, as far as received by present-day believing critics. That theory maintains that the Old Testament contains some erroneous statements as to fact, and some doctrinal teaching which is opposed to that of Christ; that it is, in fact, a mixture of truth and error, in which the truth is ever growing and prevailing over the error. Does Christ teach that there is anything erroneous in the Old Testament? Dr. John Smith says: 'If Christ was a Critic—a true Critic—when He discovered the deciduous elements, not only in tradition, but in the Old Testament, must He not have been equally a Critic in His positive view?'<sup>1</sup>

Take first Matt. v. 17, 18; Luke xvi. 17. 'Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.' 'It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall.' This does not look as if our Lord thought there was anything erroneous, or in any sense untrue, in the Old Testament. But, it is said, the verses that follow in Matt. v. show that the words quoted do not bear their *prima facie* meaning, because Christ goes on to abrogate parts of the Law by His own teaching. Let us

<sup>1</sup> *Integrity of Scripture*, p. 104.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 31

look at this. In Matt. v. 21, Christ says, 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time.' He does not say that He is referring directly to the Law, but to what was 'said to them of old time.' He then adds that it was said, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Christ does not say this was a bad command, but that it was, in its form, imperfect—*i.e.*, it simply condemned the outward act; Christ says, 'I say unto you, not only is it forbidden to kill, it is also forbidden to hate.' The gist of Christ's words, as far as this commandment goes, is this, 'The Law was not wrong, but imperfect; I therefore do not *destroy* the sixth commandment as wrong, but I *fulfil* it by bringing out into clearness the truth which was in it only in germ; I develop it, as the seed is not destroyed but developed into the tree, the child into the man, the rivulet into the river.'

Christ then gives the same teaching as to the good, but imperfect, commands, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself'; He *fulfils* them by developing them, not by saying that they were to be cast away as wrong. In v. 38 He does not condemn the command, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'; that command was not bad as a rule for the *Magistrate*, in its place in the Law (Exod. xxi. 23, 24). But in the teaching to 'them of old' this was applied in the way of sanctioning

## 32 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

*private* revenge for private wrong; and it was this that Christ condemned. The Sermon on the Mount is addressed, not to magistrates, as such, but to the disciples of Christ in their private capacity. If the magistrate were to act on the principle 'Resist not him that is evil,' he would prove himself unworthy of the post in which God had placed him, as 'an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil';<sup>1</sup> the reign of anarchy would soon begin. In v. 43 we have a clear proof that our Lord was not condemning the Law, but the authorised interpretation of it. He says, 'Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.' Where in the Law are we commanded to hate our enemy? The Law says to every one, '*Love as thyself*,' not only 'thy neighbour,' but 'the stranger (*i.e.*, foreigner) that sojourneth with thee.'<sup>2</sup> The Law says, 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt forbear to leave him, thou shalt surely release it with him.'<sup>3</sup> This does not seem consistent with an injunction to 'hate thine enemy.' So far was Christ from thinking that to hate one's enemy is the teaching of the Law, that when He uttered what has been called the 'golden rule,' because of its embodiment of the highest Christian

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 4.    <sup>2</sup> Lev. xix. 18, 34.    <sup>3</sup> Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 33

spirit, and said, 'All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them,' He added, '*For this is the law and the prophets.*'<sup>1</sup>

We see, therefore, that the words which follow Matt. v. 17, 18, contain nothing to prove that the words of those verses ought to be toned down to mean less than they naturally imply. But, it is said, Christ certainly condemned the Mosaic law in regard to divorce.<sup>2</sup> We reply, Yes, and No. He did say that that law was, in itself, contrary to God's ideal, which ideal Christ came to teach and to enforce; but He did not condemn Moses for giving that law in the age in which he lived. A legislator may be forced by circumstances to promulgate laws which are not ideally perfect, because a better law would be a dead letter. An imperfect law that can be enforced is better than a perfect law which is systematically violated. The Law does not express approval of divorce, it simply permits it, with certain limitations. It does not occur in the ideal law given from Mount Sinai; but was a practical direction embodied by Moses in the summary given in Deuteronomy, after thirty-eight years' experience of the rebellious spirit of the Israelites. So Jesus said in regard to this law of divorce, 'For your hardness of heart he (Moses) wrote you this commandment'; that is, Moses was not at fault in giving it, it was the fault of the

Christ  
confirmed  
the Law.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Mark x. 1-9.

people which prevented Moses giving a better one. So, even in this case, Christ does not condemn the Law as containing an enactment which ought not to have been given. Moses does not enjoin divorce, he simply orders that when there is divorce it must be in writing. There is not in all Christ's sayings the *slightest indication* of His adopting the modern 'critical' position, that there are errors and mistakes in the Old Testament.

Prof. G. A. Smith writes as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

Jesus, it is true, rendered obedience to many of the formal statutes. He paid the Temple-tax, and commanded the leper whom He cured to *show himself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded*. But these and other details He enforced on the ground, not of principle, but of expediency, and in order to prevent needless scandals in the way of others. The expediency was due to the circumstances of His own time, and with these would pass away. To many other observances of the Law, Christ showed, by His neglect of them, or by His positive transgression, a high superiority. He touched the leper and did not feel Himself unclean. He reckoned all foods as lawful; He broke away from the literal observance of the Sabbath Law. He left no commands about sacrifice, the temple-worship, or circumcision, but, on the contrary, by the institution of the New Covenant, He abrogated for ever these sacraments of the Old.

This is one of those half-truths which are misleading. The passage relating to the Temple-tax,

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 13.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 35

Matt. xvii. 24-27, refers only to the question whether Christ, the Son of the King, should pay the tax for the Temple of the King ; it did not in the least refer to the question whether the Jews generally were bound to keep the Law or not ; our Lord always taught that the keeping of the Law was obligatory. It is true He came to 'fulfil' the ritual law by introducing in its place the Gospel towards which the ritual pointed ; He therefore by many actions showed that He Himself was 'Lord of the Sabbath' and of the rest of the ceremonial ritual ; but He always maintained, as long as He remained on earth, that the Law was the revelation of God's will, and was to be obeyed.

It is quite true, as Professor Smith reminds us, that Christ spoke of the Old Testament era as dispensational, and therefore transitory ; 'The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached.' (Luke xvi. 16). But our Saviour had no sooner uttered these words than, as if to prevent misconception, He added, 'And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail' (Luke xvi. 17). It is true that He touched the leper and 'did not feel Himself unclean.' But immediately on having done so He said, 'Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them' (Matt viii. 1-4). He foretold the fulfilment in Himself, and therefore the removal of the old ceremonial enactments (Luke xi. 41), but He said, 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat : all therefore whatsoever they bid you

observe, that observe and do' (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3). He rebuked the Rabbinic glosses on the Sabbath law; but the law itself He re-affirmed, defining its scope from Old Testament permissions, and from the purpose of its enactment (Mark ii. 25-28). And, lest any one should make a partial use of the sacred writings, He gathered them into an indissoluble unity round Himself, saying, 'The Scripture cannot be broken' (John x. 35). In fine, the entire body of Old Testament Scripture was acknowledged by Him as the sure Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

He treated  
it as  
authori-  
tative.

'Critics' say that the words, 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law,' cannot bear their *prima facie* meaning. Will they then please tell us *what the words do mean?* They certainly seem to imply that the Law had in it nothing that was wrong in its place, that its teaching was altogether true; and Christ expressly says that He came, not to destroy, but to fulfil it. We find that our Lord constantly spoke in the highest terms of the Old Testament. He constantly appealed to it as authoritative. Again and again He said, 'It is written,' or 'Have ye not read?' as an answer to questions put to Him, implying that if it was 'written' in the Scriptures the matter was settled. At the very beginning of His public life, in His temptation, the one weapon with which he foiled the tempter was 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'<sup>2</sup> Every suggestion of the

<sup>1</sup> D. M. McIntyre, *The Divine Authority of the Old Testament*, p. 76

<sup>2</sup> Eph. vi. 17.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 37

one was met with the words, 'It is written,'<sup>1</sup> in a way which implied that what was 'written' in the Scriptures must be true. And, be it well noted, all these three quotations were from the Book of Deuteronomy, and represented, not the direct words of God quoted in the Bible, but the words of Moses (according to the book itself), or the words of some other man who put them into the mouth of Moses (according to the 'critics'). In either case our Lord quoted the words of an inspired *man*, as being authoritative teaching, just because they were 'written' in the Old Testament. This was our Lord's constant practice. Again and again He used such phrases as, 'How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?' 'That the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled;' 'That the Scriptures might be fulfilled;' 'That all things which are written may be fulfilled;' 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead;'<sup>2</sup> 'Full well do ye reject

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 54, 56; Mark xiv. 49; Luke xxi. 22, xvi. 29-31. It has been said that, in this last passage, we have not the words of Jesus, but of Abraham. We reply that we have here the words which Jesus put into the mouth of Abraham, as spoken by him in the abode of the blessed after death. All our Lord's hearers would believe that Abraham would speak *the truth* under such circumstances, and to put into his mouth words that were not true would



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the commandment of *God* . . . for *Moses* said.<sup>1</sup> When asked, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' our Lord replied, 'What is written in the Law? How readest thou?'<sup>2</sup> When questioned by the Sadducees He replied, 'Ye do err, not knowing the *Scriptures*, nor the power of God.'<sup>3</sup>

One of the strongest expressions of our Lord in regard to the Old Testament is found in John x. 33-36. 'The Jews answered Him, For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?' Here our Lord expressly says, 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' 'The Scripture,' that is, 'the writing,' seems to mean the book as it stands.

The fact that our Lord treated the Old Testament as authoritative is acknowledged by the 'critics.' Thus Professor Curtis writes as follows in Hastings's *Dictionary*, Art. 'Old Testament,' p. 601:—

Both Christ and the Apostles or writers of the New be to utterly mislead the hearers. This of course our Lord would never do.

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Luke x. 25, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxii. 29.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 39

Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament. They refer to it in the words used by the Jews, 'the Scriptures' (Matt. xxii. 29; John v. 39), 'the Holy Scriptures' (Rom. i. 2), and speak of its authors being moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21), and appeal constantly to its statements as unquestioned authoritative truth. But at the same time they regarded the Old Testament revelation as partial and incomplete. Christ not only placed His own authority above that of Rabbinic tradition (Matt. v. 21, 33, 43), but likewise speaks of the teaching of the Mosaic law as permitted owing to the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. xix. 8); and St. Paul regards the dispensation of the Law as decidedly inferior to that of the Gospel: the Law was 'rudiments' (Gal. iv. 3), serving to establish a knowledge of sin. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews found the Old Testament dispensation faulty and defective. But in all these views the disparagement of the Old Testament is only relative. Christ never repudiates its revelation and authority. He puts His emphatic seal upon the Old Testament, saying (according to John x. 35, unless our Lord is here arguing *ad hominem*) that its word cannot be broken; and that not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away until all shall be fulfilled (Matt v. 18). St. Paul held likewise most strongly to its Divine origin and nature, holy, just, and good (Rom. vii. 12, 14), worthy of all honour, serving to usher in the Gospel, a tutor to bring men to Christ (Gal. iii. 24). Likewise also the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews recognised the full validity of the Old Testament covenant, but in Christ and in His Gospel the Old Testament had a full and perfect realisation. Thus the Old Testament had its chief value, since the Ceremonial Law ceased to be binding, in foreshadowing

## 40 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

Christ and the Gospel. This led to the conception of the Old Testament as a book of prophecy throughout. Wherever words and incidents suggested events in the life of Christ, or of the early Church, or where they seemed to confirm Christian doctrine, they were so applied. This application of the Old Testament in the New Testament, although it is in the line of Jewish methods of interpretation, finds its justification in the prophetic elements of the Old Testament. These look forward to a special manifestation of Jehovah, to a new relationship established between Jehovah and Israel and mankind, to a series of blessings—all of which may be summed up in the word redemption, and which likewise were coupled with the appearance of a royal person, an offspring of David. These Old Testament outlooks, according to apostolic experience and observation, were realised in and through Christ; hence the New Testament view of the Old Testament is fully justified; in details (according to historic exegesis) the applications of the Old Testament in the New Testament may sometimes be unsound, but, taken as a whole, the New Testament method is right. The redemption experienced in Christ is a fulfilment of Old Testament promises.

Prof. Curtis speaks of our Lord accepting 'the current Jewish notions' respecting the Old Testament. But He did not receive *all* their notions regarding it. He did not hold the Jews to be right when they said that we are commanded to 'hate thine enemy'; that it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath day or to pluck ears of corn on that day; that to swear by the temple was nothing; that

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 41

in common life we ought to act on the principle, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'; that the free right of divorce was in accordance with God's mind; that tradition ought to be followed, even when it conflicted with the Law; and so forth. All these 'Jewish notions' our Lord utterly repudiated. It follows that when He did accept 'the current Jewish notions respecting the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament,' we are bound, as His 'disciples,' who 'call Him Teacher and Lord,' to do the same.

Prof. Curtis suggests the possibility that in *Ad* John x. 35 our Lord is arguing *ad hominem*; <sup>*hominem*</sup> reasoning. though the way in which he puts it seems to imply that he does not think this probable. This suggestion is often made by 'critics'; and it may be well to consider briefly what is the proper scope of *ad hominem* reasoning. This kind of argument *in itself* proves nothing; it is simply directed to a particular class of persons; and its object is to show, not that the statement made is true, but that the particular persons addressed will be inconsistent with their other beliefs if they do not accept it as true. Thus, if we argue with a Mohammedan that he ought to believe in the miraculous birth of our Lord, and in His sinlessness, on the ground that these facts are either directly stated or implied in the Koran, we use an *ad hominem* argument. This argument applies only to Mohammedans; it has no force whatever

## 42 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

to the rest of the world, who believe that the Koran is a purely human and fallible book. *Ad hominem* reasoning, therefore, has no objective force, it is purely subjective; it partakes more of the nature of rhetoric than of logic. This being the case, a wise man will use it but sparingly.

In the first place, it ought never to be made the basis of our reasoning, it ought to be merely subsidiary and auxiliary. Thus, to take the case we have instanced, a missionary to the Mohammedans would not base his teaching about Christ on the Koran, but on the Gospel; and he would bring in the testimony of the Koran only as a subsidiary argument.

In the next place, when bringing forward an *ad hominem* argument, based on the false opinions of our hearers, we ought, as teachers of truth, never to leave them with the impression that we share their errors. A missionary to the Mohammedans, for instance, would never wish to leave with them the impression that he himself regarded the Koran as authoritative.

For these reasons it is not likely that our Lord would use *ad hominem* arguments to any great extent; more especially when we remember that He was introducing a religion for the *whole world* and would therefore be sparing in using arguments which had no force except for Jews. As a matter of fact, it is very doubtful whether in any of His

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 43

recorded sayings He used *ad hominem* reasoning at all. The only case in which it might perhaps have been used is when He said, 'If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?'<sup>1</sup> But it is by no means clear that the exorcism here referred to was a mere pretence. The Pharisees were not all of them bad people. Doctrinally they were purer than the Sadducees (Acts xxiii. 8), and no doubt there were many godly men among them besides Nicodemus. When the powers of evil were so specially strong, as shown in the large amount of demoniacal possession at the time of our Lord, it would not be strange if God gave to some of the 'sons of the Pharisees' the power of casting out demons.

To suppose that our Lord's repeated appeals to the Old Testament as authoritative were mere *ad hominem* appeals would imply that, in proclaiming a religion which was designed for the whole world, He was continually using arguments which in themselves were worthless, and He did so in such a way as to make His hearers believe that He shared their mistaken opinions. In regard to John x. 35, it seems extremely unlikely that, when our Lord is justifying one of the deepest of His sayings, 'I and My Father are one,' He should use mere *ad hominem* reasoning—that is, employ an argument which

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 27.

*in itself* is worthless; that He should appeal to a book as the authoritative declaration of God's will when it really was not so. Looking at the matter as a whole, we believe we are justified in regarding our Lord's words, 'The Scripture cannot be broken,' as a summary of His teaching as to the authoritativeness of the Old Testament.

Christ's  
testimony  
to the Old  
Testament  
after His  
resurrec-  
tion.

This was the way in which Christ uniformly spoke of the Old Testament Scriptures, during the time when, filled with the Holy Ghost, He went about giving that teaching which He said was not His, but that of the Father which had sent Him, the teaching of God Himself. And even after His resurrection, when all the infirmities of His human nature had been laid aside for ever, when He lived in 'Paradise'<sup>1</sup> and only occasionally visited the earth, and, probably, had resumed those attributes of His Deity of which He had 'emptied Himself' in order to 'become a servant,' so that it was even then true that 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' and 'in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden'<sup>2</sup>—even then His testimony to the Old Testament was on the same lines as before. When with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, 'He said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 3, 9.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 45

have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.' And a few hours after, when He met the disciples gathered together, 'He said unto them, These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their mind that they might understand the Scriptures; and He said unto them, Thus it is written.'<sup>1</sup>

We do not specially dwell upon the references to the Old Testament in the Epistles, because these were written by men like ourselves, and many of the 'critics' would not acknowledge that their words are as authoritative as those of Christ. That the Apostles looked upon the Old Testament as the absolutely authoritative revelation of the will of God, just as the Jews did, is acknowledged by the 'critics' as much as by the 'traditionalists.' And we must remember that the Eleven had been with Jesus for two or three years, in constant communion with Him, and being constantly taught by Him; and just before His death our Lord expressly said to them, 'I have yet many things to say

The testimony of the Apostles.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44-46.



unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth.'<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of truth did come upon them at Pentecost, and Matthew, John, and Peter in their writings, and Peter in his words recorded in Acts, quoted the Old Testament as authoritative, just as Christ did. So did the Apostle Paul, that man of marvellous power and influence, who was able to break himself away completely from what was erroneous in the Jewish teaching, which he had from childhood received so heartily, and yet with equal heartiness retained the Jewish reverence for the Old Testament, as the authoritative Word of God. He also received direct revelations from Christ.<sup>2</sup>

We must be pardoned if, in regard to our estimate of the Old Testament, we think we are safer in the same boat with such a man, and with the other Apostles of Jesus Christ, especially when they have '*Him* in the boat' also, than if we join the band of learned scholars, however numerous, who, leaving out of consideration the New Testament view of the authority of the Old, are floundering about in the sea of speculation, driven hither and thither by the winds of conflicting theories, and trying to keep themselves afloat with the planks of their own hypotheses, reasonings, and opinions.

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 12, 13.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 23; 2 Cor. xii. 1-4; Gal. i. 12.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 47

Keeping in view the promises of Christ to His Apostles, we hold that their teaching is really the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and therefore as much the word of God as the teaching of Jesus Christ; on the same lines as that teaching, but in a developed form. But, for the purposes of the present argument, we lay stress mainly on the belief and teaching of the Lord Jesus, whose testimony in favour of the Old Testament is as decided as that of His followers, the Apostles. This, then, is our foundation-principle, in regard to the Old Testament as well as in regard to everything else, the principle which He Himself laid down in the words:<sup>1</sup> 'Be not ye called Rabbi: for ONE is your teacher . . . neither be ye called masters [*i.e.*, leaders of the way, teachers]: for One is your master, even the Christ.'

Those 'critics' who do not hold that our Lord actually shared the mistaken views of the Jews in regard to the authority of the Old Testament, urge that He *accommodated Himself* to the people in this matter, because He did not think those views harmful enough to combat, and therefore did not wish to unnecessarily increase the hostile forces arrayed against Him. But we ask, Is there in Christ's character and teaching anything that looks like 'accommodating Himself' to the errors of those around Him? Is there

The  
theory of  
accommodation.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii. 8-10.

anything like 'accommodation' in the repeated utterance, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' in Matt. xxiii.? Christ condemns not only their false practices, but their false interpretation of Scripture (vv. 16-19); but He never blames them for their recognition of the supreme authority of Scripture itself; on the contrary, He says that such laws as that of tithing were obligatory (v. 23), they ought not to be 'left undone,' and He tells 'the multitudes and His disciples' that they ought to obey the Scribes when they teach them to follow the law of Moses (vv. 2, 3). In Matt. xv. 6, He draws a clear distinction between the 'word of God' and the 'Jewish tradition'; the latter is wrong, because it is inconsistent with the former. Christ does not 'accommodate Himself' to their belief in their tradition, why should it be supposed that when He distinguishes between it and the written Law He does use 'accommodation'? Christ was constantly opposing the wrong beliefs and practices of the people; why did He keep silent about their belief in the absolute authority of the Old Testament, if this belief was contrary to the truth of God? In the *Grand Old Book*, by Prof. McCaig, we read (p. 69):—

There are two kinds of accommodation which a teacher may use. He may so accommodate his teaching to the capacity of his scholars that he may meet

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 49

them on their own level, and seek to raise them gradually, keeping back more difficult truths until plainer ones have been apprehended. Such accommodation Christ did use. . . . But there is another kind of accommodation. A teacher may lower himself to the level of his scholars' ignorance and prejudices, so that he assumes they are right, and does not seek to correct their mistaken ideas, but puts all his teaching into the same mould, making it harmonise with their false fancies, lest running counter to their prejudices he should meet with their dislike. Now, a teacher who could so accommodate himself to his scholars would surely not be worthy of the name.

What would be thought of a school in the prospectus of which it was stated that, 'The head master will make it a point to accommodate himself to the opinions and prejudices of the schoolboys'?

Furthermore, how will this 'accommodation' theory suit the narrative of the Temptation? Our Lord does not simply utter the words, 'Man shall not live by bread alone,' etc., as if they rested on their own intrinsic excellence, but quotes them on the authority of the 'written' Law of God; and the tempter in his reply does the same. Was the evil one, who had been tempting men since the creation, as ignorant as the 'critics' believe the Jews to have been of the facts of history? And if he was, did our Lord think it right and wise to 'accommodate Himself' to the devil? If, however, it be said,

as many 'critics' maintain, that the narrative of the temptation is not literally true, but represents the inner conflict in the Redeemer's human soul by which He gained the victory over the lower elements of His nature, then the theory of 'accommodation' is at once given up. For, in that case, the narrative would show that in the *inmost recesses of His nature* Christ sustained Himself by quoting the Old Testament as authoritative. In fighting against strong temptation in the inmost soul, man does not attempt to gain the victory by make-believes.

Once more: if it was necessary for our Lord to accommodate Himself to His enemies, the Jews, surely He might have taught the real truth to His own chosen disciples. He was constantly with them and teaching them during the years of His ministry; and after His resurrection, when the imperfections of His human nature had all passed away, and He lived in the unclouded light of the other world, He was 'appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.'<sup>1</sup> Surely such questions as the following were among the 'things concerning the kingdom,' on which the leaders of the Christian Church, and its chief teachers all through the ages, ought to know the truth. Was the ritual law really given to Moses or

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 3.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 51

was it inaugurated a thousand years later by Ezra? Is the narrative in the Pentateuch really true, or is it a mixture of truth and imagination, so made up that the fact was not observed for eighteen centuries? Were the patriarchs living men or merely myths? Is the Old Testament authoritative all through, when rightly interpreted, or is it a mixture of truth and error which the reader has to separate as best he can? On what principles is the book to be interpreted? And so of all the other questions now at issue. The 'critics' maintain that their views make the Old Testament much more real and profitable than before, and remove serious difficulties in the way of the outside world receiving Christ. If this be so, and if Christ knew it all, it is passing strange that He never gave a hint of it to His Apostles; and that when He promised to give them the 'Spirit of truth,' who should 'guide them into all the truth,' He should keep from them that very important part of truth which relates to the origin, truthfulness, authority, and principles of exposition of the Old Testament? And yet it is a fact, acknowledged on both sides, that the Apostles did continue to hold those views of the Old Testament which the Jews held, and they follow what the 'critics' call the 'Rabbinical' system of interpretation. Our Lord evidently never taught them anything contrary to those views.

We close these observations on the 'accommodation' theory with a practical remark. The 'critics' hold that their views are true, but that Christ did not disabuse the Jews of their false belief or even teach the Apostles, who were to be the founders and leaders of the Christian Church, what the true views really are. We have, then, these three conclusions, one of which we must accept.

*Either these new views are not true,*

Or our Lord knew them to be of so little importance that He did not care to undeceive the minds of the Apostles in regard to them—in this case *we need not trouble ourselves about them;*

Or if, as the 'critics' say, their theory is important, making us understand the revelation of God in the Old Testament much better than the 'traditional' one, and removing obstacles in the way of intelligent men becoming Christians; then, in that case, when 'speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God' to His Apostles, who were to be the leaders and teachers of the Church throughout the ages, *our Lord deliberately left the Apostles in darkness on this important matter, and consequently left all the Church in darkness on it for eighteen centuries.*

So far as we can see we must accept one of these three conclusions.

We come back, therefore, to the position which

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 53

we submit the New Testament involves, namely, that our Lord regarded the Old Testament as the authoritative revelation of the will of God, and that we, as disciples of Christ, are bound to treat the Old Testament as He did.

But, it may be said, If certain things about the Old Testament seem to us right, how can we think otherwise, whatever may be the teaching of Christ or any one else? Can we help thinking our own opinions true? Certainly we can; we are continually giving up our own opinions, on the ground that some one, whom we believe to be better acquainted with the facts than we are, tells us we are wrong.

A schoolboy thinks a certain Greek noun is nominative, his master tells him it is genitive; does the boy say, 'Well, I *must* stick to my own opinion'? No, he at once believes what the master tells him, because he knows the master is more likely to be right than he is.

A man is ill, and thinks he has a disease for which there is a certain remedy; he calls in a physician who tells him he has a different disease which requires a different remedy. Does the man say, 'I must stick to *my* opinion in the matter'? If he does he will very possibly die, and should a true and brief epitaph be desired for him it might run thus, 'Here lies a fool.'

A man thinks he has a good case and is



inclined to go to law; he takes counsel's opinion and is advised that he has no case. Does he say, 'I must stick to my own opinion'? If he does, he will be a poorer man at the end of the lawsuit than he was at the beginning.

We are continually giving up our own opinions, when experts tell us we are wrong. And is not Jesus Christ the Expert of experts, in all points relating to God's will and its revelation? If we say, we must hold to our opinions, whatever Jesus said about the Old Testament, then we must take the consequences; it will not be Christ who suffers from our action, any more than it would have been the doctor or the lawyer who suffered in the cases we have just supposed.

But how about my ideas of right and wrong? Can I alter them because of the opinion of another? Not so easily, because, while there are human experts who can give an authoritative answer in matters of mere knowledge, yet in matters of right and wrong it is not so safe to trust the opinions of others. Yet there are cases where it may be done. Take a simple illustration. In a garrison town the General in command has a little girl; there is a soldier of whom she is very fond, and as he is a worthy man the General allows his little daughter to play with him. The troops are ordered on active

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 55

service, the soldier is put on sentry duty, and falls asleep at his post, with the enemy near at hand. He is, by military law, sentenced to be shot, and the General orders the sentence to be carried out. Imagine the grief and horror of the little child ; that good man, whom she loved and who loved her, is shot, simply because when he was very tired he fell asleep ! Why should not he ? She always does, and is thought a naughty child if she does not. To the child's mind the thing is horribly wicked. But she knows her father and trusts him, and if he thought it right that the man should be shot, her judgment says that it must be somehow right, though her feelings tell her that it is altogether wrong. She does not realise that an army might be destroyed and a kingdom ruined by a soldier asleep on sentry duty ; but she trusts her father.

So ought we to trust God in regard to all that He says ; we ought to believe that what He declares to be wrong *is* wrong, though it may seem right to us ; and what He declares to be right *is* right, though it may seem wrong to us. We can implicitly trust the word of GOD on the question of right and wrong ; and Christ again and again said that His teaching was the teaching of God the Father. Hence all that Christ says in regard to moral matters must be right, and if His teaching on any point *seems* to us morally wrong, we are

bound to say that we are mistaken and that Christ is right, even in regard to questions of right and wrong. For instance, if Christ's teaching in regard to the Old Testament implies that God actually gave the command to destroy all the Canaanites, old and young—whether it does really imply this is not now before us; but if it does—then God gave the command, and the command must have been right, whatever we may think about it; and we are bound to *think* it right, in our cool judgment, however wrong it may *seem* to our impressions; just as a man believes the statement of his doctor and lawyer to be true, though his own reasoning may lead him to a contrary conclusion. Christ is always right on every point, and every one who differs in opinion from Christ on any point is wrong; this is our fundamental position. How a true *disciple* of Christ can hesitate to accept and act upon it seems incomprehensible.

Human  
inferences  
from  
Christ's  
teaching.

But whilst we implicitly believe all that Christ teaches, we must not equally rely upon *our* inferences from Christ's teaching. For instance, Christ said, 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' From this it has been inferred that everything that is 'written' in the Old Testament, every detail of narrative and history, and every reference to nature, when properly interpreted, with due reference to the context and the nature of the language, is true. This inference may be correct.

## CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT 57

But it is merely an inference, and therefore it may possibly be unfounded; the words of our Lord may mean merely that 'Scripture cannot be broken' in its *religious* teaching, when properly interpreted. All the New Testament quotations from the Old, so far as we remember, relate to religion, directly or indirectly; and it is *possible* therefore that the New Testament passages which assert or imply the authoritativeness of the Old Testament relate only to its teaching as to religion, and not to mere details which do not in the least affect the revelation of God's will. Similar remarks may be made in regard to all our other inferences from the teaching of Christ.

## CHAPTER IV

### The relation of the Levitical Law to the Prophetic History and Teaching

WE now come to a fundamental matter, in the present controversy, the 'critical' reconstruction of the Old Testament history in connection with the Pentateuch and the Levitical Law.

The  
'Critical'  
theory.

All the 'critics' are agreed that the Pentateuch is a composite book, formed out of the writings of different persons at different periods, and put in its present form by a 'redactor,' or editor, probably after the exile. This statement does not of itself imply that the Pentateuchal narrative is untrue. A true history may be written centuries after the occurrence of the events recorded. All the 'critics' also believe that the Levitical ritual was not, in its present form, given through Moses; the ritual was much simpler in his day, but in after years it became developed, and this developed ritual was added to that which was really Mosaic. The essence of the Mosaic law is contained in Exod. xx.-xxiv. About the time of Josiah, the

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY 59

Jewish legislation took the form it has in Deuteronomy; and after the Babylonian exile it took the form which it has in Leviticus and Numbers. In the middle of the last century there were some great critics, such as De Wette and Ewald, who also believed that the Levitical ritual was not Mosaic, but they put the ritual history in a different order. They believed that the Deuteronomic ritual was not previous, but *subsequent* to the Levitical. Dr. Driver says, 'Formerly this [P] was assumed tacitly to be the earliest of the Pentateuchal sources; and there are still scholars who assign at least the main stock of it to 9-8 cent. B.C.'<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, we have to face a singular fact. The 'critics' of the present day say that the Deuteronomic laws were in force centuries earlier than the Levitical; critics of equal learning and acumen, *with exactly the same evidence before them*, have believed that the Levitical laws were a long time earlier than the Deuteronomic. A plain Christian man may fairly infer from such a phenomenon that the arguments on one side or the other cannot be specially strong; and he may be pardoned if he says that possibly both theories are wrong, and that the facts are just

<sup>1</sup> (*Intro. to O.T.*, p. 135.) It may be doubted whether Ewald was the man to 'assume tacitly' anything. He would no doubt have had reasons for his view, as much as the Wellhausen School of critics have for the contrary view.

as they lie on the surface of the book itself, and as Christ and the Apostles appear to have believed, namely, that the Deuteronomistic legislation was just thirty-eight years later than the Levitical. When equally skilled experts give directly contradictory evidence in a law court, the plain common-sense juryman may be apt to discard the evidence of both.

While agreeing in their main positions, the Evangelical school of 'critics' differ in detail. Dr. Driver's scheme seems in substance the following. Part of the Levitical Law was given by Moses, and there is a solid historical basis to the Pentateuch; but subsequent experience led to alterations of the law in the course of centuries, and these alterations were embodied in the Mosaic substratum, so as to bring the authoritative law, all along contained in the recognised code, always up to date. He says, 'All Hebrew legislation, both civil and ceremonial, was, as a fact, derived ultimately from Moses, though a comparison of the different codes in the Pentateuch shows that the laws cannot all in their present form be Mosaic: the Mosaic nucleus was expanded and developed in various directions, as national life became more complex and religious ideas matured.' He also believes that the original basis of Deuteronomy similarly was brought up to date, and that the speeches of Moses were amplified, so as to make the book

suited to the circumstances of the day; the whole being done by prophets, and openly, without any attempt to deceive the people. This is the mildest form of the theory we are discussing.

The late Prof. Robertson Smith—whose memory is revered by those who knew him, however much they differ from his conclusions—goes much farther than Dr. Driver. He gives a definite date for the preparation of the ‘priestly narrative,’ namely, the time of Ezra; and the author of it ‘chooses a canvas as large as that of the pre-priestly Torah (Law), and throws the exposition of the system of Israel’s sacred ordinances into the form of a history from the Creation to the complete settlement in Canaan. This whole history his plan compels him to idealise or allegorise, and he does so boldly.’ ‘The decisive point is that the Mosaic tabernacle is not the tabernacle of the old pre-Deuteronomic history of Moses, and that it is equally unknown to the history of the Former Prophets. It is, in short, not a fact, but an idea, an imaginary picture of such a tabernacle as might serve as a pattern for the service of the second Temple.’<sup>1</sup> In other words, when we have the description of the Tabernacle which is contained in Exod. xxv.-xxx., prefixed by the words, ‘And Jehovah spake unto Moses,

<sup>1</sup> *O.T. in Jewish Church*, pp. 430, 410.



saying . . . Thou shalt make a table . . . thou shalt make a candlestick . . . thou shalt make the tabernacle . . . thou shalt make the boards . . . thou shalt make a veil,' and so forth, what we are really to understand by it is this, 'That is what God *might* appropriately have said, but He really *did not* say it.' And so all the rest of this ideal narrative, containing the account of some things which *might* fittingly have happened but *did not happen*, and *might* fittingly have been said but *were not* said, runs through the books from Genesis to Joshua, mixed up everywhere with the true narrative of what did happen, and what was said—the imaginary, being described as real fact quite as much as the actual, with nothing to show which was fact and which was fancy—and this constitutes the 'Law,' of which Jesus said, 'It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail'!<sup>1</sup>

We will now proceed to consider the arguments brought forward by the 'critics' to prove that the laws contained in Leviticus and Numbers could not all have been given through Moses.

**Evolution.** Some have relied upon the Evolutionary theory, and have maintained that as all things in nature and in history must have developed gradually, the full Mosaic legislation could not

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 17.

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY 63

have been established as early as the time of Moses. We reply, first, that the Evolutionary theory is by no means proved, it is still in the state of a 'theory,' and many thinkers reject it, except in a partial sense. Degeneration is as conspicuous in history as is improvement; and one of the most remarkable results of archæological science is our knowledge of the high state of civilisation of the times of Abraham and of Moses. The origination of the 'critical' theory was largely due to the belief that the age of Moses, and those which preceded it, were too rude and illiterate to permit of the history contained in the Pentateuch being true.

It was believed, in the first place, that the art of writing was then unknown, and consequently we could not rely on the truth of narratives handed down orally for many generations.

In the second place, it was believed that the age of Moses was too uncivilised for the organisation and legislation recorded in the Pentateuch to have actually been a fact. Archæology has shown how utterly mistaken both of these ideas were. Written tablets actually exist of a long earlier date than that of Abraham, and these tablets prove that the people of the time were in a highly civilised condition. Very recently discovery has been made of the code of Hammurabi, king of Babylonia, who is generally supposed to have been the Amraphel

of Gen. xiv., and who certainly lived many centuries before the time of Moses. This code, which is purely civil, is quite as elaborate as the civil law of the Pentateuch, if not more so. The discoveries of archæology therefore have shattered to pieces the old objection based on the supposed illiteracy and rudeness of the time of Abraham and those which followed it. It has been proved that there is no difficulty, from the standpoint of evolution, in the idea of Moses having promulgated the civil and ritual code which is contained in the Pentateuch. Prof. Sayce writes :

‘In fact, the whole application of a supposed law of evolution to the religious and secular history of the ancient Oriental world is founded on what we now know to have been a huge mistake. The Mosaic age, instead of coming at the dawn of ancient Oriental culture, really belongs to the evening of its decay. The Hebrew legislator was surrounded on all sides by the influences of a decadent civilisation. . . . In Egypt and Babylonia alike there was degeneracy rather than progress, retrogression rather than development. The actual condition of the Oriental world in the age of Moses, as it has been revealed to us by archæology, leaves little room for the particular kind of evolution of which the “higher criticism” has dreamed.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, p. 118.

Another thing to remember is that evolution only relates to the processes of *nature*, it cannot apply to the supernatural. All evangelical 'critics' acknowledge that the incarnation, person, life, and work of Jesus Christ form a stupendous supernatural fact, which evolution can never account for. Why should not God make preparation for this momentous supernatural fact, by giving to Moses a supernatural revelation of the whole system, in its complete form, which was to be one of the chief elements in the preparation of the world for Him? Evangelical 'critics' acknowledge that the complete system which they believe was established after the exile, was better adapted than the previous laxer system to keep the Jews loyal to God. Robertson Smith says: 'Under Providence the Code of Ezra [by which he means the Levitical Law as we have it in the Pentateuch] and the Reformation of Ezra were the means, amidst the general dissolution of the Persian and Hellenic East, of preserving and maturing among the Jews those elements of true spiritual religion out of which Christianity sprang.' That is to say, the Levitical Law was the system into which the people of Israel, by their experience and by the wise teaching of prophets and scribes, gradually grew, and it proved the very best system to preserve 'true spiritual religion.' Why should not the all-loving and

<sup>1</sup> *O.T. in Jewish Church*, p. 420.

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all-wise God have given to Israel this best system, through Moses, from the beginning, as the law towards the keeping of which the people should ever aim? Which is the wiser and better father, the man who does not tell his son what is the best thing to do, but lets him learn it only by bitter experience, or the man who gives him wise advice from the first?

Jesus Christ gave an ideally perfect moral law in the New Testament, which Christians have all more or less failed to keep. Why should not God, when separating Israel to be His own peculiar people, have given them a law which He knew to be the best form of preparation for Christ, although He knew that the Israelites would as imperfectly carry it into practice as Christians have carried into practice the Sermon on the Mount? Believing 'critics' acknowledge that the Law was a preparation for the Gospel, and that Christ gave a *perfect* law to inaugurate the Gospel; why should not God have given, at the inauguration of the preparatory system, the Levitical Law which Robertson Smith describes as 'a complete theory of the religious life'?<sup>1</sup>

Passages  
quoted by  
'critics.'

Certain passages in the Old Testament in relation to sacrifice are brought forward by 'critics' in support of their views. The chief of these are the following. In Hos. vi. 6 we

<sup>1</sup> *O.T. in Jewish Church*, p. 230.

read, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' This is supposed to imply that the prophets did not approve of sacrifice. But the parallel line which immediately follows, 'and the knowledge of God *more than* burnt-offerings,' suggests that 'not' in the first line means really 'more than.' This is an idiom that is a very natural one. We see it in such passages as, 'The kingdom of God is *not* in word, but in power.'<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, God's kingdom does come 'in word,' it is the preaching of the Gospel which establishes it; but the Apostle means that it does not come 'in word *only*,' power is a more important characteristic of it. That the passage does not condemn the offering of sacrifice is clear from the fact that our Lord quoted it with approval (Matt. ix. 13), and yet in the previous chapter (viii. 4) He expressly enjoins on the cleansed leper to offer 'the gift,' *i.e.* the sacrifices (Lev. xiv. 2-32), 'that Moses commanded.'

In Amos v. 25, 26, we read, 'Did ye bring unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Yea, ye have borne the tabernacle of your king and the shrine of your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.' If we take this as meaning that sacrifices were actually not offered during the wanderings in the wilderness, it would not be inconsistent with the existence of the Levitical

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 20.

Law; for Moses himself said, in his farewell addresses, 'Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah from the day that I knew you,'<sup>1</sup> and this rebellion might have shown itself in disobedience to God's commands about sacrifice, especially when they were in a sense under the ban, condemned by God to die in the wilderness. But the meaning may be that, when the Israelites joined idolatry to their sacrifices, God regarded these as no sacrifices at all.

In Jer. vii. 22, 23, we read, 'For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Harken unto My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the way that I commanded you, that it may be well with you.' These words are not opposed to the history as contained in the Pentateuch. God said nothing about sacrifices (with the one exception of the Passover) in Egypt; nor in the covenant He made with Israel at Sinai. The essence of that covenant was *obedience*, 'If ye will obey My voice, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own possession.'<sup>2</sup> The appointment of the Levitical Law came some months after the exodus; the Tabernacle was set up a year after

<sup>1</sup> Deut. ix. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xix. 5.

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it, and the Levitical Law apparently followed its erection. This law was simply *a part* of the obedience which formed the essence of the covenant.

Other passages, like 'Thou delightest not in sacrifice'; 'Incense is an abomination to Me'; 'Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth,'<sup>1</sup> simply teach the evangelical truth that outward worship in itself, apart from heart worship, is something in which God has no pleasure; and when heart-worship is not joined to a sacrifice, the latter becomes hypocritical, and therefore an abomination to God. If Isa. i. 13-15 teaches that God is opposed to the practice of the Levitical rites, then it also teaches that He is opposed to prayer; for He says, 'When ye make many prayers I will not hear.'

The chief line of argument on which the 'critics' base the necessity of their reconstruction of the history of Jewish ritual is this: they say that the historical books of the Bible, from Judges to Kings, by their statements and by their omissions, imply that the full Levitical Law was not known before the exile. They decline to accept the testimony of Joshua, because they join it with the Pentateuch as one of the books to be tried, and they, therefore, refuse to accept its evidence; they also exclude

The  
'critical'  
recon-  
struction  
of O.T.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. li. 16; Isa. i. 13, 14.



Chronicles, because they think its testimony prejudiced and unreliable. *These books, it may be mentioned, all testify against their views.* 'Critics' are skilful in trying to prove, and sometimes assert without proof, that books which testify against them are untrustworthy, and that passages in accepted books which testify against them belong to a later age; but that what appears to be in their favour is all genuine and true. However, we will first take their own witnesses, the books from Judges to Kings.

The main stress of their argument is to the effect that the historical books which they accept as trustworthy history make no mention of a large portion of the Levitical Law, and make statements which imply that that Law, as we now have it in the Pentateuch, was not then in force. We offer the following remarks:—

**Existing  
law is  
often dis-  
obeyed.**

1. The fact that a law is not obeyed is no proof that the law does not exist. Otherwise, it would be quite possible for fortieth century critics to prove that the Sermon on the Mount could not have been in existence in the nineteenth century, on the ground that Christian governments and Christian people were continually violating its precepts. Every one acknowledges that the law as originally given by Moses prohibited idolatry, and yet how frequently the Israelites, under the Judges and

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY 71

in both the kingdoms, for many centuries, fell into this very sin. In all countries and in all ages people are constantly doing what they know is not right, breaking the law which they ought to keep.

2. It is alleged that not only the mass of the people, but good men like Samuel and others, broke the Levitical and Deuteronomic Law of the 'one sanctuary,' by offering sacrifices in many places. We reply, in the first place, that it is by no means clear that good men did break the Levitical Law in the cases which the 'critics' bring forward. The chief cases alleged are those of Samuel and David. In regard to Samuel, and to David in his early years, the times were exceptional. In Samuel's childhood the Tabernacle and all its vessels were at Shiloh, and so far as we know the Levitical Law was observed there. After the defeat of the Israelites narrated in 1 Sam. iv., we do not know where the Tabernacle was; but it was not at Kirjath-jearim, where the ark was; there was therefore, at that time, no 'one sanctuary' in existence.

The late Prof. W. H. Green, an American theologian who died a few years ago, and was acknowledged by the 'critics' to be a very competent scholar, wrote thus:<sup>1</sup> 'There is not from Joshua to Samuel a recorded instance of

<sup>1</sup>, *Moses and the Prophets*, p. 137.

[acceptable] sacrifice elsewhere than at Shiloh, which is not explicitly declared to have been offered either in the presence of the ark or in connection with an immediate manifestation of the presence of Jehovah or of the Angel of Jehovah.' He goes on to show that up to 1 Sam. iv. the Tabernacle was at Shiloh, which had its Aaronic priesthood, and was the place authorised for sacrifice. To it all Israel went to worship. After the events recorded in 1 Sam. iv. Shiloh was deserted for ever, the Tabernacle and the ark were separated, the ark was kept in a private house. The people were not restored to God's favour and the regular performance of their worship until the time of David. God had abandoned Shiloh and had not indicated where the true sanctuary should be; hence the letter of the law had to yield to its spiritual import of *true worship*. Acceptable sacrifice is recorded to have been offered only either (a) when God had visibly appeared (Judg. ii. 1-5, vi. 20-24, xiii. 15-20), or (b) when Samuel, God's special representative for the time, offered sacrifice. In Elijah's time the people of the Northern kingdom altogether rejected Jerusalem as the sacred city, and Elijah was forced to offer sacrifices where he could. Moreover, Samuel and Elijah were both prophets, and acted under the direct impulse of the Spirit of God. The God who gave the Jewish ritual had

the right to make occasional exceptions when He chose to do so.

In 1 Kings iii. 2, we read, 'Only the people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of Jehovah until those days.' This confirms the position we have just taken, that in the time of Samuel there really was no 'one sanctuary': the Deuteronomic Law in regard to this matter was therefore in abeyance, and devout Israelites had perforce to fall back upon the old patriarchal custom of offering sacrifice to God in various high places.

It is noteworthy in this connection that worshipping in high places is nowhere mentioned as a sin until the building of the Temple; and that thereafter we find it again and again referred to in the Books of Kings. The Book of Deuteronomy simply enjoined that sacrificial worship should be confined to one sanctuary; but it nowhere names the place or date of the establishment of that sanctuary. It appears not to have been definitely fixed until the Temple was built, and therefore the law of 'one sanctuary' was to a large extent in abeyance up to that time.

Dr. Driver gives as an illustration of the non-observance of the Levitical Law the fact that 'David offers sacrifice (as seems evident),'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Why 'evident'? In 1 Kings viii. 63, we read that Solomon

with his own hand' (2 Sam. vi. 13). In reply let us look to the wording of the Law (Lev. i. 2, 3, 5), 'When *any man of you* offereth an oblation . . . *he* shall offer it . . . and *he* shall kill the bullock.' The same principle applies to all the animal sacrifices, the burnt, peace, and sin offerings; not the priest, but the man who brought the sacrifice was the proper person to kill it. The word used in 2 Sam. vi. 13, is used of the people generally (not only of the priests) in Lev. xvii. 5, xix. 5, xxii. 29. Driver refers also to David's *blessing* the people, as being a purely priestly function. But surely Deut. x. 8 and xxi. 5, which he quotes, while making the act of blessing part of the special duty of a priest, do not imply that it was wrong for a father to bless his son, or a king to bless his people. It is also said that the fact that David appointed his sons to be priests (2 Sam. viii. 18) proves that the Levitical Law was not then in force, as that Law restricts the priesthood to the family of Aaron. It is not certain that the English R.V. in that place is correct: the margin and American revisers translate 'chief ministers.' But even if we grant 'offered' (same Heb. word as in 2 Sam. vi. 13) 142,000 animals; does it 'seem evident' that he did this 'with his own hand'? This word 'evident' here is one of the instances of jumping to conclusions, taking things for granted instead of proving them, which we often find in 'critical' writings.

that the right translation is 'priests,' this would not prove the non-existence of the Law at that time, because even good men sometimes feel it to be right—whether it really is so or not—to abstain from carrying out the exact wording of the Scripture. Very few Christians, for instance, feel that it is their duty to practise feet-washing, or 'saluting one another with a holy kiss,' in spite of John xiii. 14 and 1 Cor. xvi. 20. To the great majority of Christians nothing is clearer than that the New Testament enjoins the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper as obligatory on the Christian Church; and yet one section of that Church, which has comprised some of the noblest Christians that ever lived—the Society of Friends—conscientiously believes it to be the will of God not to observe these ordinances. If they can feel it their duty to act thus in the full light of the Christian dispensation, shall we think it impossible that a man so imperfect as David, in the twilight of the Old Covenant, should have thought it right to make his sons priests in spite of the existence of the Levitical Law? We remember also that there have been many true Christians in the Roman Catholic Church, although we believe that Church in so many points is opposed to New Testament teaching. Yet the New Testament Law exists in spite of its being broken by Christians; and the Levitical Law in like

manner may have existed in spite of not being carried out even by devout men.

No necessity to refer in O.T. to some points of the Law.

3. Non-reference in the historical or prophetical books to the Levitical Law might arise from the simple fact that there was no occasion to refer to many of the enactments of the Law. For instance, no one doubts that circumcision was from the first one of the most obligatory religious enactments of Judaism; yet we have no reference whatever to circumcision in the historical books, including even the ecclesiastical Books of Chronicles; and we have only two references to it in the Prophets (Jer. iv. 4, ix. 25), and in neither of these is it referred to as a ritual duty. So, also, the keeping of the Sabbath, an undoubtedly early institution, is not mentioned between the times of Moses and King Jehoram. Dr. Driver acknowledges what we are maintaining when he says,<sup>1</sup> 'That many of the distinctive institutions of P are not alluded to—the Day of Atonement, the Jubilee year, the Levitical cities, the Sin-offering, the system of Sacrifices prescribed for particular days—is of less importance: the writers of these book may have found no occasion to mention them.' He adds, 'But the different *tone of feeling*, and the different *spirit* which animates the narrative of the historical books, cannot be disguised: both the actors and the narrators in Judges and Samuel move in an

<sup>1</sup> *Literature of Old Testament*, p. 137.

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atmosphere into which the spirit of P has not penetrated. Nor do the allusions in the pre-exilic prophets supply the deficiency, or imply that the theocratic system of P was in operation. The prophets attack formalism and unspiritual service; they therefore show that in their day *some* importance was attached by the priests, and by the people who were guided by them, to ritual observances; but to the institutions specially characteristic of P they allude no more distinctly than do the contemporary historians.<sup>1</sup> It does not seem quite clear what all this means, and it is difficult to argue about such things as *tone* and *spirit* and *atmosphere*. Perhaps the best thing therefore is to put the case as we understand it, and see if the Pentateuch, as it stands, is historically inconsistent with the tone or contents of the historical and prophetic books.

First, let it be remembered that, as we have just seen, the reason why many of the institutions of the Levitical Law were not referred to may be simply because there was no occasion to refer to them. Next, many Levitical institutions, as we shall shortly see, *are* alluded to

**Harmony  
between  
the Law  
and the  
Prophets.**

<sup>1</sup> We may add that the Day of Atonement, the Sabbatical year, and the Jubilee year are also not referred to in the *post-exilic* literature any more than in the pre-exilic; yet the 'critics' do not regard this as a proof that these were not parts of the P legislation.



in these books. In the third place, from the very beginning, moral law (including duty towards God as well as duty towards man) seems to have been treated as more important than ritual. The Ten Commandments were issued by the voice of God Himself to all the people, from Mount Sinai, with the most solemn and awe-inspiring accompaniments; the Ritual Law is given quietly, to Moses and Aaron alone. The precepts contained in what is called the 'Law of holiness' (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.) are mostly moral, rather than ritual, precepts. The words of warning which were to be engraven on tablets, and solemnly read from Mounts Ebal and Gerizim,<sup>1</sup> were all moral, there is not a single reference to ritual among them. Thus the general *spirit* of the Pentateuch is in the direction of teaching that morality is more important than ritual, and there is nothing which implies the contrary.

We come to the times of Samuel, the prophet in whom, historically, the periods of the Judges and of the Kings meet, and we find him giving utterance to the same sentiment, 'Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.'<sup>2</sup> 'Critics' say that this passage is moulded by the writer of the Book of Samuel in accordance with the spirit of later times, but

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxvii. 11-26.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 22.

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY 79

this is simply one of their many unproved statements. We are now taking the Old Testament *as it stands*, to see if it is a consistent whole ; if it is, we shall not need a 'critical' theory of reconstruction, in order to mend what, as a matter of fact, stands in no need of mending.

We come next to the Prophets, including under this term, as in the Hebrew Bible, the histories written in a prophetic spirit, Judges to Kings ; and we find exactly the same spirit, morality is higher than ritual, and therefore is much more frequently referred to. 'Critics' acknowledge that the superiority of the moral and spiritual over the ritual is the essence of the prophetic spirit. The poetical or Wisdom books also manifest the same spirit ; they hardly touch on ritual at all. *All through* the Old Testament, therefore, we have this great truth continually brought out in various ways. Thus the Pentateuch and the history, and all the other books of the Old Testament, accord in 'tone' and 'feeling' and 'atmosphere.'

We now compare the Old Testament, thus viewed as a whole in its 'tone,' with the references to it in the New ; and we see the force of the words of our Lord, when He described what was the essential principle of the old Scriptures, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself . . . on these two

Harmony  
of both  
with the  
New Tes-  
tament.

## 80 OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.'<sup>1</sup> There is no contradiction between them, all through, their essence lying in these two great moral precepts, on which they 'hang,' so that the removal of them would bring the Law and the Prophets prostrate to the ground, as the walls of Jericho fell. '*The whole law*,' moral, civil, and ritual; the daily sacrifice of innocent lambs and bullocks and pigeons being as consistent with these two great commands as the words, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' Christ sees no antagonism between priest and prophet, as so many modern 'critics' do; the 'Law' which He so highly praises says that it was through the *prophet* Moses that God ordained the *priestly* ritual. Between the *false* priest, who put ritual in the first place, and the *true* prophet there was antagonism; just as there was between the *true* priest who put ritual in its right place as secondary, and the *false* prophet who 'prophesied out of his own heart.' But the true priest and the true prophet put morality first and ritual second; it was so in the 'Law,' and it was so in the 'Prophets,' as much as it is in the teaching of Christ. When we thus look at the Bible as a whole, we see *one* tone and spirit and atmosphere, in Law and Prophets and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 36-40. This translation of the American R.V. is as literal as it is forceful. 'Whole' in the Greek is emphatic by position.

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY 81

Gospel alike, because all alike are inspired by the one Spirit of God. We need no *reconstruction*, for the building is complete and solid as it stands, a truthful and divinely inspired narrative of God's wise and loving dealings with Israel.

We have said that we do not recognise Dr. Driver's 'spirit of P' or the 'tone' and 'feeling' and 'atmosphere' which to him makes so much difference between the Levitical ritual and the prophetic narrative. But we recognise something else in the Bible that is very real; it is the 'spirit of Christ and His Apostles,' and the 'tone and feeling and atmosphere' of the New Testament, in all its declarations about the Old. From beginning to end of the New Testament there is nothing but veneration for, and recognition of the authority of, the 'Law and the Prophets,' as being actuated by one spirit, without any internal opposition, and as constituting in its essence the golden rule of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Of this 'tone and feeling and atmosphere' there can be no doubt; the 'critics' practically recognise it when they say that, 'Both Christ and the Apostles or writers of the New Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament.'<sup>2</sup> We prefer recognising

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, article 'Old Testament', p. 601.

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Ritual  
not to be  
urged  
upon un-  
godly men.

the actual 'spirit' of the New Testament to speculating about the 'spirit' of the hypothetical P.

One thing should be remembered in connection with the alleged fewness of prophetic references to Old Testament ritual. It is this—not only are moral duties more important than ritual, but, while morality without ritual is imperfect, ritual without morality is absolutely worse than nothing, it is hateful to God. 'The sacrifice of the wicked is not only useless, but an *'abomination.'*<sup>1</sup> God says, 'I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts *my soul hateth.*'<sup>2</sup> Hence, where immorality prevails, the preaching of ritual duty is altogether out of place, it would simply urge the people to add to their other sins the vilest sin of all, that is, hypocrisy. A missionary to those who are living in sin in the slums of London does not preach the obligation of baptism and the Lord's Supper; he preaches on 'righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come,' on 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ': the obligation of keeping Christian ordinances would be kept back until repentance and faith had come into being. It would not be right to infer from this that the New Testament contains no teaching on the Sacraments. Nor is it right to infer from the silence of the prophetic 'Missioners

Prov. xxi. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. i. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xx. 21, xxiv. 25.

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of Israel that the Law at their time was destitute of those ritual ordinances, which they do not refer to, when insistence on them would only interfere with their primary duty of preaching the necessity of *moral* reformation.

4. We actually have in the historical and prophetic books references to many of the Levitical institutions. We may mention the following. Distinctions of *clean and unclean* food (Judg. xiii. 4, 7); the *Nazirite* vow (Judg. xiii. 5, 7, xvi. 17; Amos ii. 11, 12); 'offerings made by fire' (1 Sam. ii. 28); the '*lamp of God*' (1 Sam. iii. 3); the *guilt-offering* (1 Sam. vi. 3); the *shewbread* (1 Sam. xxi. 6); *tithes and free-will offerings* (Amos iv. 4, 5); *burnt and peace offerings* (1 Sam. vi. 14, viii. 10); the *Urim and Thummim* and the *Ephod* (1 Sam. xiv. 3, 41). These references are taken from the *Old Testament Introduction* of Dr. Driver, who acknowledges the early existence of these institutions (p. 143). The *passover* is referred to in 2 Kings xxiii. 21, 22; this passage shows that the feast was recognised as obligatory, according to the 'book of the covenant,' and had been observed in former years, though not with such solemnity as on the present occasion. If we compare Exod. xxiii. 14-17; Lev. xxiii. 34, and 1 Kings viii. 2, ix. 25, it seems evident that the feasts of *Pentecost* and *Tabernacles* were celebrated also. We have traces of an *hereditary priesthood* in Eli and his

There are in O.T. references to many Levitical institutions.

sons, as in the genealogy, 'Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah' (1 Sam. xiv. 3); and there is nothing to hint that the chronicler is wrong when he says that Ahimelech, Eli's great-grandson, was descended from Ithamar, the son of Aaron (1 Chron. xxiv. 3, 6). We have references to the *new moon* and the *Sabbath* (2 Kings iv. 23). Note especially 1 Kings viii. 3-11, 'All the elders of Israel came and the priests took up the *ark*. And they brought up the *ark of Jehovah*, and the *tent of meeting*, and all the *holy vessels* that were in the tent; even these did the *priests* and the *Levites* bring up. . . . And the priests brought in the *ark of the covenant* of Jehovah into *its place*, into the oracle of the house, the *most holy place*, even under the *wings of the cherubim*.' We have here a large number of references to the ritual institutions of the Pentateuch. And yet some 'critics' tell us the Mosaic tabernacle 'is not a fact, but an idea, an imaginary picture.' In 1 Kings ii. 3 it is stated that David spoke to Solomon of what was 'written in the Law of Moses'; and yet the 'critics' maintain that there was no written law for centuries after that time.

In 2 Kings xii. 16, we have distinction made between '*guilt-offerings*' and '*sin-offerings*,' one of the minute points of the Levitical Law. We have also in the Books of Kings numerous

references to the worship on the 'high-places,' the different kings are praised or blamed according as they repressed or permitted such worship. There is nothing to imply that this worship was paid to idols; 1 Kings iii. 3 and 2 Kings xviii. 22 rather imply the contrary; and, if this be so, they show that the law of the 'one sanctuary' was in existence at least as early as the time of Solomon, though the law was not properly observed.

The act of Jeroboam in making the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, in order that the people might not 'go up to offer sacrifices in the house, of the Lord at Jerusalem,'<sup>1</sup> is an incidental proof of the existence of the 'one sanctuary' law at that time, and of the fact that it was more or less observed.

2 Kings xvii. 34-40 is noteworthy. The writer of the book here expressly affirms that the calamities which came upon the Northern kingdom of Israel arose from their non-observance of 'the statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which He [Jehovah] wrote for you' (v. 37), and these words are represented as having been spoken by Jehovah when He made a covenant with them, which covenant we know was, according to the Pentateuchal history, made in the days of Moses. Yet the 'critics' maintain that, at the time of the overthrow

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xii. 26-30.



of the Northern kingdom, not a single part of the Mosaic law was written. The only part of the Pentateuch in existence was JE, which is supposed to have been a mere narrative, not an authoritative law book. But the repetition of words, 'the statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment,' imply the existence of a definite written law, and well represent the whole Pentateuchal Law, given in parts as the occasion required, with the frequently repeated words, 'Jehovah spake unto Moses.'

The early prophets, Hosea and Amos, also refer to some of the ordinances of the Law. 'I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies.' 'I wrote for him [Ephraim] the ten thousand things of My law; but they are counted as a strange thing. As for the sacrifices of Mine offerings,' etc.<sup>1</sup> 'I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer Me your burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts' (Amos v. 21, 22). There are also in Hosea and Amos a number of expressions similar to those which occur in the P

<sup>1</sup> Hos. ii. 11, viii. 12. The English R.V. renders the second text, 'Though I write for him My law in ten thousand precepts,' putting the American rendering, as given above, in the margin.

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portions of the Pentateuch, and which probably are quotations from them; but this cannot be proved; and we do not wish to follow our friends the 'critics' by basing arguments on surmises. The words of Isaiah, in ch. viii. 20,<sup>1</sup> imply that in his time there was a recognised body of 'law,' to which appeal could be made, and by which all statements could be, and ought to be, judged.

Dr. John Smith writes <sup>2</sup> :—

- Both prophets, directly or by implication, refer to Jerusalem as the central seat of worship. Israel is in sin, having broken with this central worship. There was a written law which they had ignored, and the precepts incidentally referred to are not confined to Exod. xx.-xxiii., the earliest fragment, but range over all the codes. The living beginnings of the nation's history are traced back to Egypt, to deliverance from captivity. And most vividly of all do the prophets realise that, in a sense peculiar and exclusive, Israel is the covenant people of God. From that far-off beginning they have been in that relation under the law of Jehovah; 'but they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law.' The standpoint of the prophets is the reverse of what modern criticism avers.

We thus see that even the witnesses on whom the 'critics' rely in some respects testify against them; and in regard to the ordinances in the Levitical Law to which they do not refer, Dr.

*Review  
the argu-  
ment.*

<sup>1</sup> 'To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them.'

<sup>2</sup> *Integrity of Scripture*, p. 56.

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Driver acknowledges, as we have seen, that 'the writers of these books may have had no occasion to mention them.' Moreover, our Lord sees nothing whatever of the contrast between Priest and Prophet on which the 'critical' theory is based.

The case, then, stands thus. The main argument of the 'critics' is that the existence of the full Pentateuchal ritual in the time of Moses is inconsistent with the prophetic narrative and teaching, in Judges to Kings, and in the Books of the Prophets; and therefore the full ritual cannot have been given through Moses. Thus Dr. Robertson Smith<sup>1</sup> writes of the Law according to the old 'traditional' view.

Manifestly it is a complete theory of the religious life. Its aim is to provide everything that man requires to live acceptably with God, the necessary measure of access to Jehovah, the necessary atonement for all sin, and the necessary channel for the conveyance of God's blessing to man. It is, I repeat, a complete theory of the religious life, to which nothing can be added without an entire change of dispensation. Accordingly, the Jewish view of the law as complete, and the summary of all revelation, has passed into Christian theology, with only this modification, that, whereas the Jews think of the dispensation of the law as final, and the atonement which it offers as sufficient, we have learned to regard the dispensation as temporary, and its atonement as typical, prefiguring

<sup>1</sup> *O.T. in Jewish Church*, pp. 230, 233.

the atonement of Christ. But this modification of the Jewish view of the Torah does not diminish the essential importance of the law for the life of the old dispensation. The ceremonies were not less necessary because they were typical; for they are still to be regarded as divinely appointed means of grace, to which alone God had attached the promise of blessing. . . . I think that it will be admitted that in this sketch I have correctly indicated the theory of the Old Testament dispensation which orthodox theologians derive from the traditional view as to the date of the Pentateuch. I ask you to observe that it is essentially the Rabbinical view, supplemented by a theory of typology; but I also ask you to observe that it is perfectly logical and consistent in all its parts. It is, so far as one can see, the only theory which can be built on the premisses. It has only one fault. The standard which it applies to the history of Israel is not that of the contemporary historical records, and the account which it gives of the work of the prophets is not consistent with the writings of the prophets themselves.

*'It has only one fault,'* these are the words of the pioneer in Great Britain of the modern 'critical' school. We have attempted to show that *this one fault is really non-existent*; the 'Prophets' do not contradict the 'Law,' but, as our Lord again and again said or implied, 'The Law and the Prophets' bear but one testimony, and that testimony is substantially the same as His own teaching, that love to God and man is the supreme duty of all, and

that 'justice and mercy and faith' are 'weightier' than 'tithing' and other ritual laws; but *both* ought to be attended to; 'these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.'<sup>1</sup> Robertson Smith acknowledges that the 'Law and the Prophets' of Christ's time are substantially the same as they were in the time of Ezra, and as they are in the Old Testament of our time.

Are  
Joshua  
and  
Chronicles  
historical-  
ly trust-  
worthy?

In this great suit, therefore, 'The Critics *versus* the Pentateuch,' we submit that the case for the plaintiff fails, and the matter might rest here. But we also have witnesses to call for the defence; these are, in the first place, the books of Joshua and of the Chronicles. The 'critics' object to receive the testimony of these books; why do they? Joshua is put out of court in the matter because the book is regarded by the 'critics' as so essentially bound up with the Pentateuch as to make the whole one Hexateuch. The book is, therefore, put in the prisoners' dock with the other books which are to be tried, and its evidence is held to be inadmissible. But why? Is there a shadow of an argument to prove that the narrative contained in Josh. xxii. 7-34 is historically untrue? The only argument, if it can be called one, is the prepossession which so many 'critics' appear to have, that their own opinion is *certainly* true

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii 23.

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and therefore all documentary evidence against it must be certainly false! This narrative proves conclusively that the duty of worshipping only at 'one sanctuary' was held by all Israel, as early as the time of Joshua, to be of urgent obligation; and one of the main foundations of the 'critical' platform is that the 'one sanctuary' legislation is several centuries later than the time of Moses.

We next consider the arguments against the Books of Chronicles. Dr. Driver sums up the argument against the books in these words.<sup>1</sup>

It does not seem possible to treat the additional matter in Chronicles as strictly and literally historical :  
(a) In many cases the figures are incredibly high ;  
(b) in others the scale or magnitude of the occurrences described is such that, had they really happened precisely as represented, they could hardly have been passed over by the compiler of Samuel or Kings ;  
(c) elsewhere, again, the description appears to be irreconcilable with that in the earlier narrative ; (d) while nearly always the speeches assigned to historical characters, and the motives attributed to them, are conceived largely from a point of view very different from that which dominates the earlier narrative, and agreeing closely with the compiler's. The peculiarities of the historical representation which prevails in the Chronicles are to be ascribed, no doubt, to the influences under which the author lived and wrote. The compiler lived in an age when the theocratic institutions, which have been placed on a new basis

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to O.T.*, p. 532.

after the return from Babylon, had long been in full operation, and when new religious interests and a new type of piety—of course, with points of contact with the old, but, at the same time, advancing beyond it—had been developed, and asserted themselves strongly. The chronicler reflects faithfully the spirit of his age. A new mode of viewing the past history of his nation began to prevail; pre-exilic Judah was pictured as already in possession of the institutions, and governed—at least in its greater and better men—by the ideas and principles which were in force at a later day; the empire of David and his successors was imagined on a scale of unsurpassed power and magnificence; the past, in a word, was *idealised*, and its history (where necessary) rewritten accordingly. Thus the institutions of the present, which, in fact, had been developed gradually, are represented as organised in their completeness by David: the ritual of the Priests' Code is duly observed; the Passovers of Hezekiah and Josiah (the former of which is not mentioned in the book of Kings at all, the latter only briefly) are described with an abundance of ceremonial detail, suggested, no doubt, by occasions which the compiler had witnessed himself; David organises a vast military force, and amasses for the Temple enormous treasures; his successors have the command of huge armies, and are victorious against forces huger even than their own. In these and similar representations there is certainly much that cannot be strictly historical; but it was not the chronicler's intention to pervert the history; he and his contemporaries did not question that the past was actually as they pictured it, and the chronicler simply gives expression to this persuasion.

It is not necessary to deny—on the contrary, it is highly probable—that a traditional element lies at the basis of his representations; but this element has been developed by him, and presented in a literary form, with the aim of giving expression to the ideas which he had at heart, and of inculcating the lessons which he conceived the history to teach.

The first argument (a) relates to the *numbers* in Chronicles, 'In many cases the figures are incredibly high,' and he adds the following note: 'It is illegitimate to explain these as due to textual corruption; the numbers in the Chronicles are systematically higher than in other parts of the Old Testament.' This statement does not appear to be correct. We have recently compared the narratives of the chronicler with their parallels in Samuel and Kings, and we find only the following variations in numbers.<sup>1</sup>

(i.) 2 Sam. viii. 4, x. 18, have 1,700 or 700 and 1 Chron. xviii. 4, xix. 18, have 7,000 horsemen or chariotmen.

(ii.) 2 Sam. xxiii. 8 has 800 and 1 Chron. xi. 11 has 300 men.

(iii.) 2 Sam. xxiv. 9 has for Israel 800,000 and Judah 500,000 men, and 1 Chron.

<sup>1</sup> The comparison between parallel passages in the Old Testament is much facilitated by using Canon Girdlestone's *Deuterographs* (Clarendon Press, Oxford), where the two narratives are placed side by side, and the differences marked by italics, brackets, or spaces, so that they can be seen at a glance.



xxi. 5 has for Israel 1,100,000 and Judah 470,000 men.

- (iv.) In 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, David bought the *threshing floor and the oxen* for 50 shekels of silver, and in 1 Chron. xxi. 25, David gave *for the place* 600 shekels of gold.
- (v.) In 1 Kings vii. 15, the two pillars of the Temple are 18 cubits high; in 2 Chron. iii. 15 the height is given as 35 cubits.
- (vi.) In 1 Kings v. 16, we have 3,300 *officers*; in 2 Chron. ii. 18 we have 3,600 *overseers*.
- (vii.) In 1 Kings iv. 26, Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots. 2 Chron. ix. 25 gives 4,000.
- (viii.) In 1 Kings ix. 23, Solomon's chief officers are 550, and in 2 Chron. viii. 10 we have 250.
- (ix.) 1 Kings ix. 28, we have 420 talents, and in 2 Chron. viii. 18 we have 450.

It is possible we may have inadvertently omitted one or two differences; but certainly there are but few; and in about twenty cases the numbers agree. We have therefore *twenty* cases of agreement in numbers between the two narratives, and only *ten* cases of difference. And out of these points of difference, in three cases (iii. vi. ix.) the numbers in the two narratives do not naturally differ; and in three cases (ii. vii. viii.) the chronicler gives actually a *smaller*

number than the other history. In (iii.) he gives a larger number for Israel and a smaller number for Judah, though the 'critics' maintain that his general aim is to glorify Judah by exaggerating its prosperity. In (iv.) there is a difficulty, but 'the place' might mean the absolute ownership of valuable property, as compared with merely, 'the threshing floor and the oxen.'

It will be seen that a comparison of the two narratives shows that there is nothing to justify the charge that the numbers are 'systematically higher' in Chronicles than in the prophetic narrative.

If we now take a good Concordance and look out the word 'thousand' (the largest numerical term in the Authorised Version) we shall find that the numbers are not as a rule strikingly different from the general run of numbers in Samuel and Kings. It may seem strange, for instance, that, in a little country like Judah, Abijah should be able to muster 400,000 men, and Israel 800,000,<sup>1</sup> but 2 Sam. xxiv. 9 puts the numbers of warriors in the two countries as 500,000 and 800,000 respectively in the time of David; so that, large as the number seems, the chronicler gives a *smaller* number than the prophetic historian assigns to the time of David; though the population might have materially increased in the sixty years, mainly of peace

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xiii. 3.

and prosperity, which had intervened between David and Abijah. A similar remark applies to many of the places where the numbers seem too large in Chronicles; parallels can be often found in the prophetic narrative.

There are a few passages, it is true, where the number seems unusually large, such as 1 Chron. xxii. 14; 2 Chron. xiii. 17, xiv. 9, xvii. 14-18, xxviii. 6, 8. In regard to the first passage, (i.) 100,000 and 1,000,000 may perhaps be merely round numbers; (ii.) there were two talents in use, one of them only half the value of the other;<sup>1</sup> (iii.) the numbers are the words of David, not of the chronicler. In regard to the large number of soldiers, and of men killed, we must remember that in ancient times, when war was more a matter of hand to hand fighting, man to man, rather than of tactics, and when prisoners were often ruthlessly slaughtered, the size of armies and the loss of life were much more than in modern times. At the battle of Tolosa, in the Middle Ages, 200,000 Moslems are said to have been slain. In the recent Boer war almost every man, and many boys, were enrolled in the army. So it was in ancient times. It must be remembered also that the

<sup>1</sup> The writer of the article *Weights and Measures* in Hastings's *Dictionary* (III. 903) reconciles 1 Kings x. 17 with 2 Chron. ix. 16 by 'the persistence side by side of the two standards, the heavy and the light.'

chronicler lived in Palestine, and knew well how small the land of Judah was; if he asserted numbers were impossibly great he would have known the fact. It is possible the numbers in 2 Chron. xvii. 14-18 included mercenaries. Moreover, these large numbers occur in the prophetic narrative as well as in Chronicles, as we have seen in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. Besides this, there is also the possibility of copyists' errors. These errors are specially likely to occur in the copying of numbers. A prominent 'critic,' Bishop Ryle, in his note on Ezra i. 11, in the Cambridge Bible, writes: 'It is probable therefore that the discrepancy arises from some ancient corruption in the text, which has been caused by copyists' errors in transcribing numbers. This is a frequent source of mistake.'

We think enough has been said to show that Dr. Driver is not justified in his statement that the numbers in Chronicles are 'systematically higher than in other parts of the Old Testament.' Even if the numbers are exaggerated, that would not prove that the positive historic statements, implying the existence of the Mosaic ritual in David's time, are false. The Turks enormously exaggerated the number of Russians killed at Plevna, but this did not throw doubt on the fact of the siege itself. Many a truthful man will almost unconsciously exaggerate numbers,

who yet would never fabricate a fact. The occasional high numbers which occur in Chronicles are a very insufficient basis to justify the charge that the narrative is not strictly historical, but is throughout idealised.

Other  
points in  
regard to  
Chroni-  
cles.

In regard to the clause of Dr. Driver's which we have marked (ii.), as the instances are not mentioned we cannot deal with them; but two remarks may be made: (1) it is always hazardous to argue from the silence of writers, since we do not know what reasons may have led to it. The prophetic narrative seems to have had as one of its main objects to show in the past history of Israel that obedience to God brought happiness, and disobedience brought misery. The chronicler laid more stress on the greatness of God's people in the time of the godly kings, and might therefore bring in matters of 'magnitude' which did not come within the scope of the pathetic narrator. (2) As we have just said, exaggerations as to the details of an event do not necessarily throw doubt on the event itself, or on the substantial truth of other events recorded by the writer.

We also cannot deal with (iii.), because we have not the details referred to. But the two narratives, the prophetic and Chronicles, have been always in the possession of the Christian Church, and if the discrepancies had been very serious we should have heard more about them

in the old controversy about the inerrancy of the Bible. It must be remembered that we are now considering, not the absolute inerrancy, but the *substantial truthfulness* of the books; and it is an acknowledged point in the principles of evidence that differences of detail on the part of witnesses do not invalidate the truth of the fact testified to; they rather tend to show that the evidence has not been 'cooked.' Our faith in the fact of the resurrection of Christ is not in the least shaken by the difficulty of weaving the words of the four Evangelists into a clearly consistent narrative.

In regard to (iv.), again, we have no details. One, however, we may refer to. It is said that the speech of Abijah recorded in 2 Chron. xiii. 5-12 is inconsistent with the character of the man as depicted in 1 Kings xv. 3, where it is said that, 'he walked in all the sins of his father which he had done before him; and his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as the heart of David, his father.' Rehoboam does not appear to have been an idolater, but he was not a godly man like David; Abijah's character was the same, he was not a true servant of God, but on the other side he was not an idolater. If we look at his speech in Chronicles, we find the main drift of it was that the people of the Northern kingdom ought to come back to their allegiance

to himself, because God's true worship was celebrated at Jerusalem; in short, his object was not religious, but political; and ungodly rulers are always ready to patronise religion, and to speak very piously, when it suits their political purpose. When the French Government were violating the laws of God and man in their outrageous treatment of Dreyfus, they were, for political reasons, very careful about the rights of 'The Church' in their colonies. Hence there seems no inconsistency between the two statements regarding Abijah. If the chronicler 'idealised' the history, why did he state that his great hero, David, made a mistake about the removal of the ark, which led to God's showing His anger by killing Uzza (1 Chron. xiii. and xv. 2); and why does he state that none, even of the godly kings, carried out the law of the Sabbatical year (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21)?

In all Dr. Driver's summary of reasons there appears to be no adequate ground whatever for discrediting the explicit and detailed testimony of the Books of Chronicles as to the existence of the Levitical ritual from the days of David onwards. If the narrative be true, so far from the Bible History being in conflict with the Pentateuchal Law, it is really in harmony with it; and it is the 'critical' theory of the Pentateuch which is inconsistent with

the history. No doubt the Books of Chronicles were written with the special purpose of giving the *ecclesiastical* history of Judah. But a book written with a purpose is not necessarily un-historical. A man might write a History of England with the special idea of showing the hand of God in it; but that would not imply that he would fabricate or even colour, facts in order to show it.

It is also very noteworthy that the writer is constantly quoting the sources of his history. He mentions the following sources: 'the last words of David,' 'the chronicles of king David,' 'the history of Samuel,' 'of Nathan,' 'of Gad,' 'the prophecy of Abijah,' 'the visions of Iddo,' 'the history of Shemaiah,' 'the history of Jehu,' the history 'of Isaiah,' 'the commentary of the book of the Kings,' 'the words of Hozai.'<sup>1</sup> The writers mentioned were mostly contemporary with the events they record, and it is not unlikely that these historical sources of the Chronicles were engraved on clay tablets and that the originals of them were accessible to the chronicler, like the tablets which have come to light in thousands during the last few years.

Such tablets have been recently discovered in the ruins of Taunach near Mount Carmel. The fact that the chronicler is so careful to name

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxiii. 27, xxvii. 24, xxix. 29, 2 Chron. ix. 29, xii. 15, xiii. 22, xx. 34, xxiv. 27, xxvi. 22, xxxiii. 19.



his sources is a strong guarantee of the truthfulness of his narrative.

We shall see shortly that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which are acknowledged on all sides to be historical, strongly confirm the traditional view.

**Summary.** In regard to the alleged disharmony between the Levitical Law and the prophetic writings, we have endeavoured to establish the following facts:—

1. The non-observance of the Levitical Law to a greater or less extent, as appears in the historical books, no more disproves the existence of that law than does the disobedience of Christian men prove the non-existence of the Sermon on the Mount, and the rest of the New Testament Law.

2. In the Prophetic narrative and teachings there are references to very many points of the Levitical ritual.

3. The absence of references in the prophetic writings to some of the details of the Mosaic Law can be accounted for on two grounds, (a) there may have been no occasion to refer to them, (b) in preaching to men who violate moral laws, preachers of righteousness pay little heed to matters of mere ritual.

4. There is no proof whatever that the narratives in Josh. xxii. and in the Books of Chronicles are untrue.

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5. If we take the historical books as they stand in the Bible, from Joshua to Nehemiah inclusive, so far from the narrative being inconsistent with the Levitical Law, it is thoroughly in harmony with it, and it is the 'critical' view which is in disharmony with it.

6. The view that there is any real disharmony between the Law and the Prophets is not sustained by a comparison of the spirit which underlies them, and is contradictory to the teaching of our Lord as to the essential oneness of Law, Prophets, and Gospel.

We have thus endeavoured to show that there is no reason for a reconstruction of the Old Testament history, the history as it stands being thoroughly consistent, the Law having really preceded the Prophets. But there are also serious historical difficulties in the way of the acceptance of the theory which has recently become so popular. Difficulties  
of the  
'critical'  
view.

We first take Dr. Robertson Smith's view as the representation of that theory, partly because it is very definite, and partly because it is, we believe, largely accepted by 'critics.' This theory maintains that, between the times of Josiah and of Ezra, D, that is, the Book of Deuteronomy, was the recognised Jewish ritual authority, and that a narrative of events from the creation to the time of Joshua, called J E, was also in existence. The Pentateuch, as it now stands, did not exist. In the time of Ezra the

ritual of D was developed into the form of the Levitical ritual which we have in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. At that time P was written, in order to give an ideal basis to the new legislation which was then started, representing it to have been enacted by Moses, when, as a matter of fact, it was not. If there were any avowed deception in the matter, if the narrative of P were represented as actually true, it would be hard to believe that a narrative based on deception should form a part of that Law of which Jesus said that 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away' from it. Even if P were *avowedly* an 'idealised' history, as we have seen Robertson Smith calls it; if the people were distinctly told, at the time of its publication, that it was largely imaginary; yet even then one shrinks from the thought of bringing imaginary words of *God* into a narrative, of making the Eternal God one of the characters of a religious novel! To state, in any sense, that *God did say what He really did not* is too much like what the tempter did in Eden, when he 'brought sin into the world and all our woe' by maintaining that *God did not say what He really did*.

Why did  
no tradi-  
tion of the  
real facts  
come  
down?

Furthermore, on this theory we are asked to believe that the Jewish people of the time of Ezra accepted this imaginary record as a beautiful thing, and before very long actually mixed it

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY 105

up with the true narrative of J E and D so skilfully that for over two thousand years neither Jew nor Gentile, Hebrew nor Christian could tell which part was fact and which was fiction. The wisest Jews and the wisest Christians all maintained, without the slightest doubt, that the narrative was a true record of what had been said to and done by Moses, but they were all alike deceived; some 'critics' even dare to say that Christ Himself was deceived! And yet not the remotest inkling of a tradition survived as to what the real facts of the case were. We know that Ezra and Nehemiah were in harmony with one another; but the narrative of Neh. v., vi. shows that there were among the Jews people who were not in sympathy with Nehemiah; and in Neh. xiii. we learn that Nehemiah had strongly rebuked Eliashib, the high priest, and driven away his grandson; he had 'contended with,' and 'cursed' and 'smote' and 'plucked off the hair of' many Jews because of their actions; and thus the high priest himself was made hostile to him. Would nothing in the shape of tradition as to the origin of the Pentateuch have come down through this hostile party if Robertson Smith's theory were true?

There is another difficulty. According to the theory we are now discussing, when Ezra came to Jerusalem the only parts of the Pentateuch in existence were J E and D. Ezra altered

Why is the Law so loosely put together?

the ritual of D, and thus produced the Levitical ritual, which the 'critics' maintain is in some respects inconsistent with that of Deuteronomy. It seems rather strange that Ezra should have dared to alter the law given by Moses in the name of God, especially when Moses had expressly said, 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you.'<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the result of his action was that the Pentateuch is, on the face of it, a narrative of a legislation given by Moses, and a recapitulation of that legislation of Moses thirty-eight years afterwards; but really, according to the 'critical' theory, the first legislation is put last, and the last first; and Moses, as a matter of fact, did not give in its fulness either one code or the other. Furthermore, the legislation alleged to be given later is inconsistent with that alleged to have been given earlier; and yet it is the legislation which comes first in the book that is to stand, and not the later. This seems a great muddle. If Ezra dared to alter the law of Moses, why did he not go a little farther and alter Deuteronomy also, so as to make it consistent with his new regulations? Can it be that Deuteronomy is not so inconsistent with Leviticus as the 'critics' make it out to be?

<sup>1</sup> Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32.

And if the Pentateuch is such a 'scissors and paste' affair as the 'critics' make it out to be, why was not the work done more thoroughly? The redactor could cut out what he liked from his sources, why not cut out one of two inconsistent passages? Thus, one of the points on which the 'critics' lay most stress is that the command in Exod. xx. 24 is contradictory to the 'one sanctuary' legislation of Deuteronomy. Why then did not the redactor use his scissors and cut it out, just as he did, at his own sweet will, with so much of J and E? A man who compiles a sacred law-book, so that the worship of God may be properly carried on, would surely not leave contradictory commands in it. And why did not the redactor arrange the whole matter more systematically? Why not, for instance, put the paragraph about the burnt-offering in Lev. vi. 8-13 in the first chapter, which dealt with that offering, and Lev. vi. 14-18 with ch. ii., which treats of the meal-offering? If, as the Pentateuch states, laws were given as the occasion arose, and are recorded in their proper place in a truthful narrative, that which would otherwise be unsystematic becomes natural.

Prof. Rawlinson, in *Lex Mosaiica*, p. 22, writes :—

The curious features of the Levitical Code, that it is intermittent, not continuous, being interrupted from time to time by portions of the historical narrative

of the wanderings, and having thus the air of a discontinuous and fragmentary collection of occasional enactments rather than of a formally issued code, is highly suitable to the circumstances of Moses' life, which, from the time of his becoming the leader of the people, was so full of 'tangled occupations' as to allow him scant leisure for his legislative work, and to necessitate his executing this work by snatches, in the intervals of business, and issuing his laws, to some extent, as the occasion required. It is scarcely conceivable that any legislator, whose life was less hurried and hard pressed than that of Moses, would have broken his legislation into fragments, and have intermixed these fragments so inartificially and inconveniently with a series of historical narratives.

The improbability of the matter being so loosely put together, if the 'critical' theory be true, is increased by the fact that so many critics think that the original matter was revised again and again by many successive editors.

How did  
Joshua  
become  
separated  
from the  
Penta-  
teuch?

Once more; the 'critical' theory joins Joshua indissolubly with the Pentateuch; how did it get disjoined, so that all Jewish tradition maintains that the Pentateuch was by Moses and Joshua by one of the 'earlier prophets'? It could not have been done during the lifetime of any who remembered the Hexateuch being composed in the time of Ezra or later. And when this was done, how is it that the rivals of the Jews, the Samaritans, followed the lead

of their enemies,\* so that we have a Samaritan Pentateuch and not a Hexateuch? When two rival and hostile communities live side by side, the one party does not imitate the other, the very act of their rivals doing anything would naturally lead the other party *not* to do it; they would be glad of the opportunity of finding fault with their enemies for doing it.

We have just referred to the Samaritan Pentateuch. The existence of this book constitutes a very serious difficulty in the way of accepting the new 'critical' theory. The Samaritans were a mixture of Israelites and heathens,<sup>1</sup> and at first their religion was a mixed one. When the captives returned from the exile, and were about to rebuild the Temple, the 'adversaries of Judah'<sup>2</sup> wished to join them in the work, as worshippers of the same God. These were the Samaritans, as is acknowledged by Bishop H. E. Ryle, in his notes on Ezra iv. 1 in the 'Cambridge Bible.' The Jews refused to recognise them as fellow worshippers, and therefore they became 'the implacable foes of Jerusalem,'<sup>3</sup> and stopped the building of the Temple for many years. About eighty years after this Ezra came, and fourteen years after him came Nehemiah, and the two Jewish heroes worked side by side. They were opposed by the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 24-41.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra iv. 1-6.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Ryle, *Ezra*, p. xxxvi; Ezra iv. 24.



enemies of Judah, prominent among whom was Sanballat, who, Bishop Ryle says, 'was evidently one of the rulers of the Samaritan community.'<sup>1</sup> In Neh. iv.-vi. we see what a determined enemy Sanballat was. We know that the enmity between Jews and Samaritans continued till the time of our Lord.<sup>2</sup> These Samaritans continue to the present day, few in number, living in Palestine in the town of Nablous, the ancient Shechem. They have an old Pentateuch of their own, which, 'save in a certain number of comparatively unimportant readings, is identical with the Jewish Torah (Law).'<sup>3</sup>

The important question is, *When did the Samaritans get their Pentateuch?*

Bishop Ryle says (*Ezra* p. lxiv), 'When indeed the Samaritans received the Pentateuch has been disputed. But most scholars are disposed to think that at the time when the Samaritans erected a temple on Mount Gerizim, and established there a ritual to rival that of Jerusalem, they also recognised the canonical character of the Torah. This probably occurred when Nehemiah ejected the grandson of the high priest; for, according to Josephus, this renegade of the name of Manasseh was appointed high priest of the Samaritans.' Be it remembered that, on the 'critical' theory, when Ezra came

<sup>1</sup> Comment on Neh. ii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> John iv. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Ryle, *Canon of O.T.*, p. 91.

## LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY III

to Jerusalem, for nearly 200 years Deuteronomy alone had been recognised by the Jews as the 'Law of Moses,' which, as servants of God, they were bound to obey; the Samaritans either had this same D, or they had nothing at all, in the way of 'Law'; for J E was a mere narrative. Probably they would have had D, since they professed to worship the same God as the Jews.<sup>1</sup> When the grandson of Eliashib, the Jewish high priest, reached Samaria, what would have been the natural course of things, human nature being as it is, on the 'critical' hypothesis? If the Samaritans had not possessed D before this, the grandson of Eliashib would have told them all about it, and probably would have been able to get a copy of it from his relatives in Jerusalem.

The Samaritans had been hostile for a hundred years, and their hostility had been recently intensified by the double fact that their opposition to Nehemiah had been foiled, and that the son-in-law of their chief, Sanballat, had been ignominiously driven away.<sup>2</sup> They would naturally watch their opportunity for retaliation. They would be in no mind to receive the additions which Ezra had made to the old Law, the old God-given Law of D, which additions the Jews had accepted. The Jews were their enemies, and Ezra and Nehemiah they specially hated

<sup>1</sup> Ezra iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Neh. xiii. 28.

after the events recorded in Neh. iv., xi. The renegade Jews, priests, and others, who are believed to have also joined the Samaritans, having been compelled to leave Jerusalem for the same reason as the grandson of the high priest, would also have been very bitter against Ezra.

When all these enemies heard that Ezra had set up a new ritual of his own, and had actually caused a book to be written which stated that what Ezra had just devised had really been uttered by Jehovah to Moses a thousand years before, they would feel that their opportunity had come. The Samaritans would not, like the 'critics,' treat the matter mildly and call this an 'ideal' narrative—they would call it a forgery and a lie,<sup>1</sup> and very likely they would add that it was downright blasphemy for a man to put in writing that ordinances which he himself had established had really been enjoined by God; especially in view of the verses we have quoted from Deuteronomy, in which Moses solemnly enjoins upon the people not to alter the law which God had given through him. They would enlarge in very plain language upon what we may describe in English as the hypocrisy of those rascals Ezra and Nehemiah, who were too holy to allow the Samaritans to worship God with them, and yet who themselves were

<sup>1</sup> Many Christians of the present day do the same.

guilty of forgery and deceit and blasphemy. All Samaria would be full of it; the children would hear the story, and when grown up would tell it to their children, very likely with embellishments; and so we should get a Samaritan tradition of the events side by side with the Jewish one; and when the Jew boasted that he had the real 'Law of Moses,' the Samaritan would reply, 'Law of Moses, indeed! Call it, rather, Lie of Ezra.' The Samaritans would maintain that they were the true believers, they held to the original pure revelation as contained in D; the Jews were the heretics, who added to the Law of God laws made by themselves, and who mixed up a partly fictitious narrative (P), made by themselves, with the old true tradition of J E, and represented the whole as the original authoritative Law and narrative of Moses. In fact, the Samaritans would take the position of Protestants, holding to the old original word of God, and would treat the Jews as Romanists, who added to it and corrupted it by their traditions.

So the two systems would come down side by side, the Samaritans recognising only D, and the Jews the whole Pentateuch, as the God-given Law of Moses. The Samaritans in after-times would never think of adopting, as the real Law of Moses, the book which the Jews possessed; to do so would be in effect to acknowledge

their own inferiority, and to come down from the strong position which they held as orthodox upholders of the old original D. A fairly parallel case would be for the Church of Scotland to beg the Pope for a copy of the Roman Catholic Missal to be kept in the Kirk archives as a record of the real apostolic ritual. The Samaritans would have preferred to concoct a 'Law of Moses' of their own, if they needed more than the D which they had, rather than be indebted to the Jews for the one which their enemies had devised. This, we submit, is what would be the natural course of things if the 'critical' position in regard to Ezra were true. Instead of this, what does the 'critical' theory compel its adherents to believe? The Samaritans, who had been 'implacable foes of Jerusalem' for nearly a century, and were just then smarting with their recent defeat and disgrace, received as the real original 'Law of Moses'—given by God a thousand years before—the Pentateuch which they knew had been, in their own time,<sup>1</sup> concocted by their bitter enemies the Jews; or else, in a later century, they suddenly gave up their strong traditional position and acknowledged their inferiority, by

<sup>1</sup> 'It seems probable that in the age of Ezra no one did care much for this distinction [between P and the old J E+D]; for presently the two books were fused together.' *O.T. in Jewish Church*, p. 430. Note the word *presently*.

accepting the Law of the Jews in place of their own time-honoured D; and, in spite of this seeming reconciliation or submission, continued to be utterly hostile to the Jews for centuries, as long as there were any Jews remaining in the country. This is what must logically be believed by those who accept the Robertson Smith theory. We are inclined to say, *Credat Criticus!* 'O "critic," great is thy faith' in the hypotheses of *man*.

It seems, thus, self-evident that bitter enemies like the Samaritans, with a rival hierarchy and temple, would never receive an essentially Jewish book, written when the enmity had lasted for a hundred years, as the real original law of God given by Moses. We seem, then, driven to the conclusion that the Samaritans must have received their Pentateuch before their enmity with the Jews commenced; that is, before the events recorded in Ezra. iv. 1, which happened eighty years before the arrival of Ezra. If this be the case, the Pentateuchal theory of Robertson Smith simply collapses; because the Samaritan Pentateuch contains the whole of the P elements, which he says were not composed till the time of Ezra.

We have a similar difficulty if we hold that P was composed, and the new legislation introduced, after the commencement of the exile, but before the time of Ezra. When could it have been

composed? During the exile, when they were captives in a heathen land, and to all human appearances might never return to their own land, it would have been both absurd and wrong to remodel the Deuteronomic legislation, which they regarded as the Law of God given by Moses. These who believed God's promise of restoration to their own land would think it wrong to alter God's Law; and those who did not expect a restoration would feel it absurd to make a new ritual law, which they could not keep in a heathen land. And when the small band of exiles returned to Jerusalem, their first act was, not to remodel the law, but to perform the ritual 'as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God.'<sup>1</sup> In the very next year they began to build the Temple; then came at once the quarrel with the Samaritans, which led to the abandonment of the building of the Temple for many years.<sup>2</sup> This quarrel produced the enmity between Jews and Samaritans which never ceased, and which would have been an insuperable obstacle in the way of the Samaritans accepting the new ritual, the new book (P), and the new Law of God (the Pentateuch), which were originated by their enemies the Jews, at a time when both parties were bitterly hostile to one another. It follows from this that the Pentateuch, which the Jews and Samaritans alike received,

<sup>1</sup> Ezra iii. 2, 4.<sup>2</sup> Ezra iv. 2-4, 24.

must have been in existence before the return from the exile.

It is also clear that the Pentateuch could not have been framed during the exile for two reasons. First, there could not have been much, if any, intercourse between the Samaritans in Palestine and the captive Jews in Babylon; secondly, the refusal of the Jews to have anything to do religiously with the Samaritans immediately on their return from exile shows that they would not have co-operated with them religiously during the exile. We are compelled therefore to bring the Pentateuch, as it now is, to the pre-exilic period—that is, the period of the composition of the prophetic narrative; and this at once proves that the prophetic narrative is not inconsistent with the Pentateuchal Law; and the very foundation of the ‘critical’ theory is shattered. It may be that the reception of the Pentateuch by the Samaritans took place at the time we read of in 2 Kings xvii. 28, when a Jewish priest was sent by the King of Assyria to teach the residents in Samaria ‘how they should fear Jehovah.’ But when we consider the rivalry between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, their differing religious polity and the fact that the Pentateuch so strongly condemns the whole religious polity of the Northern kingdom, it seems hard to see when the ancestors of the Samaritans could have received their Pentateuch except before



the severance of the kingdoms. The fact that, in spite of the Calf-worship and Baal-worship that prevailed in the Northern kingdom, the references in Hosea and Amos to a certain extent correspond to the narrative and ritual of the Pentateuch increases the probability that it dates from before the division of the monarchy. This brings the Pentateuch back to the time of Solomon. We submit that *when two bitterly hostile communities, with different polity, ritual, hierarchy, both believe a practically identical document to be the ancient authoritative record of their religion given by God, that record must have been accepted by them, and must therefore have been in existence, previous to the date at which their rivalry commenced.*

Just as it has been impossible for Jews or Christians to materially alter the Old Testament which they hold in common, because any alteration would immediately give their rivals an opportunity to attack them ; so neither the Jews nor the Samaritans would have ventured to alter their common standard of faith, because their rivals would have been down upon them at once ; and if they had done so, there would necessarily have been thenceforth two different standards. Neither party would accept the changes made by the other, when once the bitter rivalry had commenced.

The Samaritan Pentateuch which is in the

possession of the remnant of the people in Palestine at the present day is written, not in the usual Hebrew characters, but in the ancient Phœnician style of writing. This fact is a confirmation of the belief that the book dates from before the exile.

The four bulky volumes of Hastings's *Dictionary* contain nothing on the subject of the Samaritan Pentateuch. It was relegated to a fifth volume on subjects which lie 'outside the scope of a Dictionary of the Bible.' We venture to think the subject puts a very formidable obstacle *inside* the way of the 'critical' theory of the Pentateuch. The article in the fifth volume is written by Prof. König. He takes no notice whatever of the difficulty in the way of two hostile communities agreeing in accepting a common law of worship and morality after their hostility had commenced, a difficulty which has been often urged in favour of the 'traditional' view. There is only one argument which he uses to prove that the Samaritans did not possess the Mosaic Law till after the exile. It is this:—

There is at least one valid ground for the conclusion that the Pentateuch was first accepted by the Samaritans after the exile. Why was their request to be allowed to take part in the building of the second temple refused by the heads of the Jerusalem community? Very probably because the Jews were aware that the Samaritans did not as yet possess the Law book. It

is hard to suppose that, otherwise, they would have been met with this refusal.

Let another 'critic' solve the Professor's difficulty: 'The Jewish leaders might very well have declined the co-operation of these people while they maintained their impure religion, and at the same time been eager to incorporate them in the Theocracy on the terms offered to foreigners in ch. lvi. 6 f.'<sup>1</sup> This passage runs thus, 'Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto Him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.' This is the spirit that permeates Isa. xl.-lxvi., which 'critics' believe to have been the product of the exile. If the Samaritans had possessed no Law of God, the Jews of the return would have welcomed them as proselytes to the true religion, but it is no wonder that they should have refused to recognise, on the same level as themselves, men of a mongrel religion, who 'feared Jehovah, *and served their own gods*, after the manner of the

<sup>1</sup> Cam. Bible *Isaiah*, note on ch. lrv. 2.

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nations from among whom they had been carried away'; the result was that, practically, 'they fear *not* Jehovah!'

We may remark, by the way, that we have here a typical specimen of 'critical' logic, of which other instances will be given in the chapter on '*Critical*' *Methods*. A 'valid ground' for a conclusion, in a few lines, becomes only a 'Very probably'; and a brother 'critic' shows that the 'very probable' statement is decidedly improbable.

Another serious difficulty in the way of accepting the 'critical' theory lies in the facts brought out in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Jews on their return from the exile were marked by a strong desire to practise rigidly the Jewish ritual; Bishop Ryle (Cam. Bible, *Ezra* ii. 62) speaks of the 'legal spirit which animated the Jews of the return.' This is very evident, and the contrast between it and the looseness in the observance of the Law, which characterised the Jews before the exile, is *one of the main grounds on which the 'critical' theory is based*. What was the cause of the change? The 'critical' theory is that the bitter experience of the exile had taught the Jews the need of a more definite system of external religion than that of D (Deuteronomy), and they devised such a system, in the shape of the Levitical Law. In other words, their fathers

The narrative in Ezra and Nehemiah is inconsistent with the 'critical' theory.

had broken God's Law as revealed through Moses in D, and this was the cause of the terrible calamity that had occurred in the destruction of their kingdom and the exile of their people. That the violation of God's Law was the cause of all their calamities is acknowledged in Ezra ix. and Neh. ix. The Jews therefore felt that they must do what they could in order to recover their position and restore themselves to the favour of God. What would they naturally do? Surely they would try all the more earnestly to henceforth obey God's Law perfectly.

But, on the 'critical' theory, instead of doing this, instead of simply obeying God, they proceed to devise a law of their own, adding to God's law, although He had expressly commanded (Deut. iv. 2): '*Ye shall not add* unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. Not only did they add to God's law, but they altered it, which is more serious still. The 'critics' urge that the contradictions between Leviticus and Deuteronomy prove that Moses could not have given both systems of law. Every contradiction they allege makes it all the more difficult to believe that the Jews of the return would dare thus to alter the Law of God, disobedience to which had been the

cause of the ruin of their nation. The writer of the article 'Hexateuch' in Hastings's *Dictionary* calls P 'a reformation, one might almost say a revolution, in religious worship.' To 'revolutionise' the will of God revealed in D was a strange way of seeking reconciliation with Him! When sinners have suffered grievously through *breaking God's law*, they do not generally show their penitence by *setting up a law of their own devising* in its place. The 'traditional' theory is that the Jews all along had had the Levitical Law given by Moses, as it is contained in the Pentateuch, had again and again broken it, had experienced the bitter effects of their conduct in the exile, and had returned to Judea firmly resolved that henceforth they would act 'as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God' (Ezra iii. 2). Is not this much more probable than the other theory?

Moreover, as soon as they returned, one of the first things they did in 'the seventh month' was to keep one of the chief festivals of that month (Ezra iii. 4). 'They kept the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the ordinance, as the duty of every day required.' Bishop Ryle's commentary on this verse is:

The words in the original are clearly a reference

to the passage in Num. xxix., where the sacrifices for the feast of tabernacles are detailed—*i.e.* 31 young bullocks, etc., on the first day; 12, etc., on the second; 11, etc., on the third, and so on. It is to be regretted that the same English words 'according to their number, after the ordinance,' which recur as a kind of refrain in that chapter (verses 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 37), were not either exactly reproduced here by the R.V. or altered there to 'by their number, according to ordinance.' The attention of the reader would then have been drawn to the echo given by this phrase to the phraseology of the Pentateuch.

It is perfectly\* clear from this narrative that when the Jews returned from exile, in the very first year, 'they kept the feast of tabernacles as it is written.' Verse 2 shows that the phrase 'as it is written' means, 'as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God.' And Bishop Ryle, a 'critic,' shows that the feast was kept according to Num. xxix. This chapter therefore was written long before that time, so long that it was believed to be in 'the law of Moses.' And yet the 'critics' attribute this chapter to P, and the Robertson Smith school of 'critics' hold that it was not written for eighty or a hundred years after the return! If P had been composed during the exile the Jews of the return, some of whom remembered the old Temple which had been built by Solomon (Ezra iii. 12), could never have believed that what had been really composed

since the destruction of that Temple was 'written in the law of Moses, the man of God.'

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah, all through, are entirely in accord with the 'traditional' view, and are opposed to the 'critical' view.



## CHAPTER V

### The Pentateuch

WE have in the last chapter referred somewhat to the 'critical' view of the Pentateuch, but it will be well to consider the matter more especially.

**Our Lord's  
teaching  
on the  
subject.**

Our first question in regard to this, as to all other matters is, what does the New Testament say on the subject? We find in the New Testament many references to 'the Law of Moses,' either in these exact words or in the statement that 'Moses commanded' such and such things. Such expressions occur as the direct words of our Lord in many places. These references show clearly that the law was, at all events in its main substance, Mosaic; but it is not clear that they necessarily imply that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. The legislator who gives laws is not necessarily the historian who records them.

But there are expressions used, the natural meaning of which is that Moses was the writer of the Pentateuch. Thus, in Luke xx. 37 we

read that our Lord said, 'That the dead are raised, even Moses showed in [the place concerning] the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' This implies that the narrative contained in Ex. iii. was written by Moses, or under his direction. A stronger passage still is John v. 45-47, 'Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?'

It is undoubted that our Lord spoke to people who believed that the Pentateuch was written by Moses. He knew that by the words 'his writings' His hearers would understand the Pentateuch, and Christ would not adopt a phraseology which would mislead the people. He therefore here calls the Pentateuch 'his writings,' *i.e.* the writings of Moses. If our Lord knew, or believed, that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, He would not have spoken in the terms He uses. As we have before seen, a wise teacher, even in arguing *ad hominem*, would never use words which would lead his hearers to think that he shares their errors. If Christ had known that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch He could easily have

put His words thus: 'There is something that accuseth you, even your own Law, on which you have set your hope. For if ye believed your own Law you would believe Me, for that Law testifies of Me. But if ye believe not your Law, how shall ye receive My words?' This appeal would have been just as forcible as the other, and would have expressed no opinion as to the authorship of the Pentateuch. Instead of this our Lord deliberately puts the man Moses and his writings in contrast with the man Jesus and His words. It is very hard to believe that He would have done this if He had not known that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.

There are other expressions in the New Testament the natural meaning of which is that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, especially when we remember that the people who were addressed believed this to be true, and would thus understand the expressions used.

When we say that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, it does not necessarily mean that he actually wrote the whole himself; he may have had helpers in the work. But the meaning is that the book was prepared under his superintendence, and adopted by him as his book; just as a statesman might issue a public document which had been drawn up by his secretary, but revised and adopted by himself.

Besides this, we have the unbroken and unhesitating tradition which has come down to us for over two thousand years, through Jew and Christian alike, that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch. The 'critics' regard tradition as worthless, but this is one of the points in which the recent discoveries in archaeology tell against them; in many cases traditional statements have been proved to be based on fact. Prof. Sayce has shown this in his recent book, *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*. In relation to the authorship of books tradition has been generally correct, because there has been no adequate motive for the falsification of authorship. When a book is written its author is generally known, and in subsequent centuries only surmises can readily arise, not a universal and persistent tradition, such as exists in relation to the Pentateuch. There has been no doubt as to the accuracy of tradition in regard to the great bulk of the writers of antiquity, and in no case has the tradition in regard to them been anything like so strong as has been that in regard to the Pentateuch.

We must also remember that it is expressly stated in Exod. xvii. 14, xxiv. 4, xxxiv. 27; Num. xxxiii. 2; Deut. xxxi. 9, 22, 24, that Moses was directed by God to write certain things down, or that Moses wrote certain things; and in two places it is said that they were to

The  
Mosaic  
tradition.

be written 'in a book,' or, as in Exod. xvii. 14, 'in the book.'

The  
burden  
of proof.

It is evident therefore that the burden of proof rests upon those who deny the Mosaic authorship, especially in view of the references to the matter in the New Testament; and they need to bring forward very strong arguments to support their case. But instead of solid arguments we find nothing but *hypotheses*, unsupported by any external evidence whatsoever; hypotheses framed to meet difficulties in the Pentateuch which are much exaggerated, and hypotheses which bring in their train far greater difficulties of their own.

No ex-  
ternal  
evidence  
for the  
'critical'  
hypothe-  
sis.

The 'critical' hypothesis is that the Pentateuch is composed from the following sources. First two narratives by persons called J and E, who lived somewhere about 800 or 900 B.C. These were combined into one narrative by a third person. After this came D, who wrote Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah or a little earlier. Then came P after the exile, who prepared the Levitical Law, embodied in a narrative of events; and lastly came the redactor, or editor, who combined them all into the present Pentateuch. Many 'critics' think there were also revision after revision of P and of some other of the documents referred to. As we have just said, there is *not the slightest shadow of external evidence* for the existence of any one

of these people, the only argument for their existence lies in the assertion that there are repetitions, inconsistencies, variations of expression, etc., in the Pentateuch, which can be best explained if we assume that all this complicated paraphernalia of sources actually existed. We need therefore first of all to see what are the objections brought against the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch; if the objections can be otherwise met, the whole array of imagined authors and editors invented to meet them simply vanishes. In our limited space it is impossible to take more than a general view of these objections, with a few illustrations. Those who wish to see how the objections can be met in detail should consult such books as Spencer's *Did Moses write the Pentateuch after all?* Some of the old objections, on which formerly much stress was laid, need not be referred to, since recent discoveries have completely answered them. They are the alleged illiteracy of the times of Moses and those which preceded, the statement that people then were uncivilised, and so forth.

A large array of inconsistencies in the narrative of the Pentateuch has been brought forward. Many of these are very trivial; instances will be given in the chapter on *Critical Methods*. In regard to many it is possible to give explanations which are quite credible and sufficient. And further, when we read a narrative of events

Alleged  
inconsistencies  
in the  
narrative.

which happened over two thousand years ago, in a strange country and amid unknown surroundings, we are always liable to think two statements inconsistent, which we should recognise as quite consistent if we knew all the circumstances of the case.

For instance, suppose that three thousand years hence the name of Napoleon III. should be as much forgotten as now are the names of the kings of the Hittites, and suppose further that a fiftieth century critic found a statement to the effect that the Emperor Napoleon died in captivity in England in 1873. He would say that this was inconsistent with the well-known fact that the Emperor Napoleon died at St. Helena in 1821; but his assertion of inconsistency would be based simply on his ignorance of the fact that there were two Emperors of the name of Napoleon. Fifty years ago it was stated that Luke ii. 2, and Acts xiii. 7, were inconsistent with Roman history and polity; further discovery has proved them to be consistent. An assertion of inconsistency, therefore, may be only a proof of ignorance on the part of the man that makes it. Moreover, people have been reading the Pentateuch 2,000 years and have not been struck with these alleged inconsistencies; and even after reading a 'critical' book which points them out, we turn to the Pentateuch itself, and it seems to us as true as

ever. Another thing to note is that very many of the alleged inconsistencies occur in Genesis ; and if Moses compiled the Pentateuch he would no doubt be the redactor of the accounts in Genesis, basing his narrative on preceding records. If the 'critical' redactor retained the inconsistencies of the Pentateuch, it would be equally possible for the redactor Moses to have retained the inconsistencies of Genesis.

Again, the 'critical' argument is that any writer will be self-consistent, and as there are inconsistencies in the Petateuch it could not have been produced by one writer, but must have been made up from many writers, and put together by a redactor. But would not a redactor be as desirous of making a *consistent* narrative as an author? A redactor can leave out and put in what he likes from his sources, and he would be a very poor workman who deliberately put together contradictory sentences in writing a narrative. For instance, we should not think much of a person who was compiling a narrative of Christ's life from the Gospels and who put in it such a sentence as this : ' Bartimæus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the wayside ; and when *they* heard that Jesus was passing by *they* cried out,' etc.<sup>1</sup> Whatever arguments against one-man authorship the 'critic' bases on the inconsistencies of the narrative tell quite as much

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 46 + Matt. xx. 30.



against the supposition that a<sup>e</sup> redactor retained these inconsistencies. A redactor is as desirous of producing a consistent history as is the original author of a narrative. The 'critics' are confident that Gen. vi. 19 is inconsistent with Gen. vii. 2. How do they account for the redactor himself having put two contradictory statements within the limit of six verses, when he had perfect liberty to choose his extracts as he liked ?

**Repetitions in the narrative.**

It has been said that the repetitions in the Pentateuch imply difference of authorship. If this be the case the 'critical' knife might be tried on some English authors, who make it a point to repeat the same idea in more ways than one, in order to press it upon the attention of the reader. The fact is that repetition was something quite natural to the Hebrew writer. Hebrew poetry is based on the union of lines related to one another, and often the relation is simply a mere repetition in different language. In the Prophets, even in the prose part, there is often repetition of this kind. It would seem natural, therefore, to see in these repetitions a Hebrew habit, when commencing a new paragraph or subject, of giving more or less briefly the substance of what had been before said. This also is a habit with other writers besides the Hebrews.

**Alleged differences of style.**

Differences of style in different parts of the Pentateuch are also said to be a proof of difference in authorship. The beginning of the 'critical'

analysis was the assertion that one writer used Jehovah and another Elohim as the name of God. But in time it was found that this was not properly carried out, and then came the assumption that there was a third person who combined them. There are some places where one name and other places where the other name preponderates, for some reason, just as we see a distinction made in the use of the names in Ps. xiv. and liii. But it does not follow that this distinction arises from a difference of authorship. We must remember that, to the Hebrew, Jehovah and Elohim each had a meaning; just as much as in English 'The Almighty' and 'The All-Loving One' have distinct meanings; and in one connection one name, in another connection the other name, would be more appropriate.

Moreover, changes are often made simply for the sake of euphony. A speaker will alternate, God, the Lord, our Heavenly Father, or Jesus, the Saviour, our Redeemer, and so forth, sometimes for a special reason, sometimes for no apparent reason. It is so in common life; if we were to read in a newspaper, 'The King came to London yesterday; His Majesty is quite well,' no one would think there was any significance in the change of name. The use of Jehovah or Elohim in Genesis is a very small basis on which to ground belief in a dual authorship.

Having made a division of, Genesis on this very doubtful basis, the 'critics' next proceed to find alleged differences of diction in other matters, and then make these differences the ground on which to say that a certain sentence belongs to this or that writer. In *Did Moses write the Pentateuch after all?* the writer remarks that the critical lists of words suggest reasoning in a circle; you first assign certain peculiarities to J, and then say that wherever we find those peculiarities we have J.

There is no doubt that there are differences in style between different authors. No one would fail to notice the difference between Samuel Johnson and John Bunyan. But these differences must not be pressed too far. A man's style may vary in different circumstances, such as, for instance, in homely conversation and in set discourse; in a jocose mood and under the influence of strong feeling. The late Dr. Landels used to read his sermons, and at times he would leave his manuscript for five minutes and give a short extempore appeal to his hearers; when he went back to his manuscript the contrast in style between the pointed appeal and the written discourse was most marked. Literary criticism as to style must be cautious; judging from internal evidence nobody would suppose that Cowper wrote *John Gilpin* or that *In Memoriam* and *The Northern Farmer* were

written by the same man. After all, the differences in style between different portions of the Pentateuch cannot be very marked, or people would have noticed the fact long ago. When we put aside theories, and just take the Pentateuch as it is, we may make the same remark as we did in regard to the alleged inconsistencies of the book. We read 'critical' remarks about this phrase belonging to J, that one to E, and another to P; and then we sit down and read the book, and find no difference as we go on; we do not know when we turn from E to P; the whole seems to read on naturally and beautifully.

One fact is noteworthy. The 'critics' allege that the Pentateuch is made up of writings J, E, D, P put together by R. All these are the product of the period 900-400 B.C. The theory is based on alleged differences in style, etc., of the writings. The Flood narrative is thus made up of J and P, on the basis of these alleged differences. But the same mixture appeared in the Babylonian Flood legend, which dates from many centuries before Moses.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to phrases like 'The Canaanite was then in the land,' 'Before there reigned any king over the children of Israel,'<sup>2</sup> which seem to imply a later date than that of Moses,

<sup>1</sup> See Sayce, *Monument Facts*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xii. 6, xxxvi. 31.

we must remember that it has always been maintained that the books of the Bible were revised by Ezra, or other inspired men, and notes like these were added to the text. In ancient writing foot-notes were unknown, notes had to be added to the text itself.

The  
phrase  
'The  
priests, the  
Levites.'

It has been said that the phrase so often used in Deuteronomy, 'The priests, the Levites,' implies that when that book was written *all* the Levites were priests. This cannot be true, because the phrase occurs in 2 Chron. v. 5, xxiii. 18, xxx. 27, which was written when the Levitical Law was fully established. In Hebrew 'the great river' is expressed thus, 'the river, the great.' Hence, 'The priests, the Levites,' simply means 'The Levite priests,' and it does not imply that all Levites were priests, any more than the phrase 'The English soldiers' implies that all Englishmen are soldiers. Nor can we infer from it that some priests were not Levites, any more than the term 'the Egyptian sphinx' implies that some sphinxes are not Egyptian. The phrase 'The Levite priests' simply means that the priests referred to were Levites, it implies nothing more, and this is fully in accord with the Levitical Law. There is nothing in Deuteronomy inconsistent with the Levitical Law which confines the priesthood to Aaron and his descendants. Why Moses should have used this phrase we cannot tell; but it may be that,

in addressing the people as a whole, remembering the rebellion of Korah the Levite and of Dathan and Abiram the Reubenites,<sup>1</sup> he may have intended, on the one hand, to conciliate the Levites by a phrase implying that the priests belonged to their tribe, and, on the other hand, to warn the other tribes to remember that *only* Levites could be priests.

We have thus briefly reviewed the general character of the arguments on which the 'higher criticism' of the Pentateuch is based, and have endeavoured to show, as far as space admitted, that there are no grounds for the reconstruction which it demands. We now come to some of the many difficulties which lie in its way.

Suppose a fortieth-century critic wishes to decide from internal evidence when the Authorised English Version was made. He would be able to form a sound argument on the absence of one simple word from it, the word 'its.' This word *never* occurs in the Authorised Version of 1611;<sup>2</sup> in its place we have 'his' or 'thereof.' Thus, 'the candlestick, his shaft and his branches . . . the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof,' etc.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, the word 'its' appeared about the end of the sixteenth century, but became generally adopted towards the close

Archaism  
in the  
Penta-  
teuch.

<sup>1</sup> Num. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> In that edition Lev. xxv. 5, *has it owne*.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xxv. 31, 38.

of the next century. This fact of itself would be a clear proof that the Authorised Version was made before the eighteenth century.

We have a precisely similar indication that the Pentateuch was written somewhere about the time of Moses, in its use of the third personal pronoun. In ordinary Hebrew we have two separate pronouns (*hu* and *hi*) for *he* and *she*, but in the Pentateuch, for the most part, the word *hu* is used for both genders. The feminine pronoun occurs in eleven passages, but in all the other 195 places where 'she' has to be expressed we have the form *hu*, which in all subsequent books of the Bible represents only the masculine. In other words, just as in the Authorised Version 'his' stands for 'his' and 'its,' so in the Pentateuch, for the most part, 'he' stands for 'he' and 'she,' and this peculiarity does not occur at all in the other books of the Bible. In ten cases it appears at first sight to occur, but only 'probably for the sake of removing grammatical anomalies.' It is to be noted that this peculiarity does not exist in Joshua, in which book the feminine pronoun occurs thirty-one times and the masculine form is not once used in its place. This is an indication that the old Pentateuch ought not to be given up for the modern Hexateuch.

The Oxford Gesenius, the most recent and the best Hebrew lexicon, based on 'critical' lines

and edited with marked scholarship, has practically no explanation to give of this phenomenon. This fact is altogether opposed to the 'critical' idea that the Pentateuch was all written after the time of Solomon. The peculiarity appears in all the separate portions of the Pentateuch, J, E, D, and P, writers covering a space of 400 or 500 years, and it appears in those which are asserted to have been written after the exile, as well as in the earlier parts. But on the 'traditional' theory the matter is quite clear. For some reason the Hebrew of the time of Moses, like the Phœnician,<sup>1</sup> used 'he' for both masculine and feminine, though 'she' was sometimes used.<sup>2</sup> The Pentateuch was written in this style, but when the Israelites had conquered Canaan they adopted the custom there current of using both 'he' and 'she,' and this custom therefore is observed in Joshua and the books which followed it. It is noteworthy that we have a similar usage in the Pentateuch, and nowhere else, in that *na'ar*, which elsewhere refers only to the male, is used for both *young man* and *young woman*.

This peculiarity is not the only archaism which occurs in the Pentateuch. There are a great many others; over a hundred of them are given

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Gesenius' *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> In *The First Bible* Col. Conder suggests that Egyptian influence may have produced this peculiarity.



in Spencer's *Did Moses write the Pentateuch after all?* In Canon Girdlestone's excellent pamphlet on 'Hebrew Criticism,' in the *Twentieth-century Papers*, we have presented, in a popular form, many of these archaisms, and also other matters connected with Hebrew criticism as it bears on the subject before us. The 'higher criticism,' has no explanation whatever to give of these archaisms. The modern school of critics often seems to overlook the evidence of such archaisms as pointing to the antiquity of the Pentateuch, and is much more vigilant in seizing upon anything which can be made to appear as evidence of late authorship. Let us have legitimate criticism by all means, but let a fair account be given of *all* evidence, internal and external.

If a fortieth-century critic would rightly infer from the non-use of 'its' in the Authorised Version that it was made before the eighteenth century, is not a twentieth-century critic entitled to make the following inference: 'Since all Hebrew books relating to events after the entry of the Israelites into Palestine uniformly use both "he" and "she," and the books relating to events that preceded that entry almost uniformly use a common word for both genders, therefore in all probability these five books were written before the entry into Canaan'?

We may remark, incidentally, that the fact that these archaisms are so carefully reproduced

in Hebrew Bibles to the present day suggests that the Hebrew scribes were far more careful to copy their manuscript correctly than the 'critics' suppose, many of whom, whenever they get to a difficult passage, think that corruption of the text is a much more likely thing than ignorance on the part of the 'critic.' It reminds us somewhat of schoolboys who, when they cannot work out their sums in accordance with the answers given in the arithmetic, say the book is wrong. Prof. Sayce, Dr. Pinches, and Colonel Conder speak in high terms of the faithful accuracy of the Babylonian scribes, and say they believe the Hebrew scribes were just as faithful.

Another thing to note is this. If we look into the last four books of the Pentateuch we shall find that they picture the surroundings of the wilderness for the most part, and not of the settled occupation of Palestine even in the portions which the 'critics' assign to P. For instance, not only the narrative, but the laws also are constantly speaking of the *camp*. In many places in Leviticus we have expressions like this, 'Thou shalt carry forth without the camp,' 'Afterward he shall come into the camp'; now, according to the 'critics,' Leviticus was written by P in Palestine after the exile. In framing laws at that time, why should the writer so often speak of 'the camp'?

We have also many passages which imply that when the Law was written the entry into Canaan was something future. Thus, 'When ye go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land . . . then it shall come to pass'; 'When Jehovah shall cut off the nations, whose land Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them.'<sup>1</sup> The 'critics' say that this was written a generation or two before the exile. 'When ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall,' etc.<sup>2</sup> The 'critics' say this was written after the exile. Many such expressions occur in the Pentateuch. The kingdom of Israel is spoken of as something in the future, 'When thou art come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say I will set a king over me.'<sup>3</sup>

There are also many other expressions which suit the time of Moses, but not the times at which the 'critics' assume that D and P were prepared. Among these we may mention the laws for the extermination of the Canaanites and the Amalekites (Deut. xx. 16-18, xxv. 17-19); the preference given to Edom over Ammon and Moab (Deut. xxiii. 3-8).

Another point is this. The 'critics' maintain that P was prepared after the exile, and that this section covers almost the whole of those parts

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xii. 19, xix. i.    <sup>2</sup> Lev. xix. 23.    <sup>3</sup> Deut. xvii. 14.

of the Pentateuch which relate to the laws of worship. Now these parts contain allusions to many things which after the exile had ceased to exist or to have any force. Thus we have a minute description of the ark, its size, material, and so forth, of the mercy-seat and the cherubim (Exod. xxv. 10-22, xxxvii. 1-9); we have also an elaborate account of the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement, the distinguishing feature of which was that on that day only in the year the high priest was permitted to enter the Most Holy place and sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices on the mercy-seat (Lev. xvi.). And yet, at the time when the 'critics' declare that the Book of Leviticus was written, there was no ark in existence; the ark had never been seen since the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The same may be said of the Urim and Thummim, which in post-exilic days had disappeared.<sup>1</sup> We have also in Num. iv. minute directions about the mode of transporting the various portions of the tabernacle, composed, according to the 'critics,' at a time when there was no tabernacle to carry.

We have also commands in the P portions of the Pentateuch which are inconsistent with the regulations in force at the time of Ezra. Thus, the age at which the Levites should begin their ministry is put at thirty years in Num. iv. 3,

<sup>1</sup> Lev. viii. 8; Ezra ii. 63.

and at twenty-five years in Num. viii. 23 ; while in Ezra's time it was twenty years (Ezra iii. 8). So also the poll-tax was fixed at a half-shekel in Exod. xxxiii. 11, and at a third-shekel in Neh. x. 32.

**Alleged  
inconsistencies  
in the Pen-  
tateuchal  
laws.**

The 'critics' urge the inconsistencies of the legal enactments of the Pentateuch as a reason why it could not have been composed by one man ; these inconsistencies, however, tell much more against the 'critical' position. According to the 'traditional' view the events of the last four books cover forty years, and the laws are narrated in the order in which they were given. As circumstances changed, details in the laws were altered to meet them ; hence the apparent 'inconsistencies.' But according to the 'critics,' the redactor who composed the Pentateuch, and who could cut out what he liked from his sources, deliberately inserted all these inconsistent laws in the law book ; and not only so, but represented the binding law as having been given first (in Leviticus and Numbers) and the obsolete law last (in Deuteronomy), thus giving the impression that the obsolete law ought to be obeyed, because it was the final form of the law which Moses gave. The greater the contradictions which the 'critics' allege to exist in the laws of the Pentateuch, the more do they condemn their own position in maintaining that the final redactor put them

all, with all their inconsistencies, into the practical law book of the Israelites, which was declared to have been given them by God Himself.

For instance, the 'critics' mention that Exod. xx. 24, gave permission to people to sacrifice to God anywhere; Deuteronomy commands that sacrifice should be offered up only at a central sanctuary. Deuteronomy also makes all the Levites priests; Leviticus allows only the sons of Aaron to be priests. The redactor, however, put all these contradictory regulations into his law book. The 'traditional' theory maintains that God first gave the law in Exod. xx. 24, which so far restricted the earlier freedom in regard to sacrifice as to say that it should be offered only where God recorded His name. Afterwards He gave the law of 'one sanctuary,' in Deuteronomy. In regard to the priesthood, it maintains that Deuteronomy contains nothing contrary to Leviticus.

Take another case. In Lev. xvii. it is enjoined that whenever an ox, lamb, or goat was killed it should be brought to the sanctuary. In Deut. xii. 15, this command is rescinded. The redactor of the Pentateuch is supposed to have put both these contradictory enactments into his law book, and P is supposed to have rescinded the natural law of Deut. xii. 15, putting in its place the law of Lev. xvii., which was

impracticable when the people were scattered throughout the land of Canaan. But if the history is true, they are not contradictory; the command to kill these animals at the sanctuary was given when the Israelites were together in the wilderness, and could obey the command; when they were scattered in the land of Israel the command would have been impracticable, and therefore it is rescinded in the farewell addresses of Moses to the people when about to enter the Promised Land. It must be remembered that thirty-eight years elapsed between the giving of the law in Leviticus to the nomad Israelites, and the recapitulation of the law in Deuteronomy to those who were about to enter upon settlement in their land.

The  
verdict of  
archæo-  
logy.

In his *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*,<sup>1</sup> Prof. Sayce has shown that the narrative of the Pentateuch altogether fits into the circumstances of the times as revealed by archæology, and that it is therefore probable that the book was composed at that time, because later writers would in all probability have shown their hand by anachronisms, or by local colouring which did not suit the time in which the events happened. He says, 'The answer of archæology to the theories of modern 'criticism' is complete: the Law preceded the

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Religious Tract Society.

Prophets and did not follow them' (p. 83). He shows how the law suited a nomad people, as contrasted with the law of Hammurabi, so recently discovered, which suited a settled people. 'The Mosaic Code must belong to the age to which tradition assigns it, and presupposes the historical conditions which the Biblical narrative describes.'

In the *Baptist Times* of September 9, 1904, Dr. Witton Davies, one of the writers in Hastings's *Dictionary*, gives an account of an interview with Prof. Sayce, in which the latter said that all the archæologists of the time take sides opposite to the 'higher critics.' He named Maspero, Wiedemann, Hommel, Flinders Petrie, Ramsay, Dr. A. J. Evans; adding that 'just as Greek archæology has upset the "higher criticism" of Homer, and is reclaiming for this great name more and more of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, so Biblical archæology is restoring Moses to his rightful place as the author of the five books called after his name.'

Dr. Witton Davies proceeds thus: 'Some months ago Wiedemann, the greatest living Egyptian archæologist, said to me, "I am indifferent whether or not the higher criticism turns out correct. I have no strong views in theology, no conception of the Bible to defend, but I am bound to say, as an Egyptologist and as an archæologist, that I am convinced



the 'critics' are altogether wrong in their views of the Pentateuch." Dr. Sachau, of Berlin, head of the Oriental Department of the University, told me in 1901 that he was "more and more inclined to reject the findings of the higher critics," and he assured me this was the attitude of Baudissin, the successor of Dillmann at Berlin.' To the names of archæologists above cited we may add those of Dr. Pinches, Col. Conder, and Mr. St. Chad Boscawen.

Summary  
of 'critical'  
difficulties.

We close the matter brought up in the last two chapters by a summary of the chief objections to the 'critical' view in a series of questions.<sup>1</sup>

If the 'critical' position be true:—

1. How is it that tradition has handed down nothing whatever as to the facts of the case?

2. It is said that Exod. xx. 24 allowed sacrifice everywhere; D restricted it to the central sanctuary, required the people to pay dues to their priests (Deut. xviii.), took away the occupation of the priests of the high places, and commanded the Jerusalem priests to share their revenues with the country Levites who came to Jerusalem. How is it that there was no protest, and that the people, the priests, and the prophets all at once accepted these restrictions, as having been the Law of Moses, when really they had

<sup>1</sup> These include many difficulties which are brought out in Wilhelm Möller's *Are the Critics Right?* and in Canon Girdlestone's *Deuteronomy*.

been made in the times of Josiah or a few years before?

3. After the exile the P regulations were introduced, which were more burdensome still, 'a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.'<sup>1</sup> How is it that at this time also there is no protest, and that all the people receive this new P legislation, with all its burdensome provisions, as having been really the Law of Moses? The books of Ezra and Nehemiah show that these reformers had many enemies, and the book of Malachi shows that the new laws were very imperfectly kept.

4. When the exile had so effectually purged the Jews from their tendency to idolatry, and the people had returned to Palestine with the strong conviction that God had punished them for their sins in breaking this law, how is it that they show their repentance, not by obeying the old law which God had given them, but by making a new law which one 'critic' calls 'almost a revolution'?

5. How is it that the Samaritans, bitter enemies to the Jews from the very beginning of the return from exile, should have accepted as the ancient Law of Moses a code which they knew had been made up in recent times by their enemies?

6. If the Pentateuch and Joshua originally made one book, the Hexateuch, how is it that

<sup>1</sup> Acts. xv. 10.

Joshua became separated from the Pentateuch? And how is it that the Samaritans again accepted the act of their enemies, the Jews, and have their ancient Pentateuch without Joshua attached to it?

7. If the Pentateuch is the work of some redactor after the exile, and contains a large number of inconsistent facts and laws, how is it that we have the following result?—

(a) The redactor, as narrator, selected from the materials, which he could deal with as he would, statements inconsistent with one another, instead of making a consistent narrative.

(b) The redactor, as compiler of a narrative embodying the law of divine worship in force in his own time, inserted both valid and obsolete laws, with nothing to show which were obsolete and which were valid; and so arranged his book that the reader would have to consider as *valid* the laws *first* given by Moses (Leviticus and Numbers), and to regard as *obsolete* the *final* form of the legislation (Deuteronomy) given by Moses thirty-eight years later, just before his death.

8. How is it that in a manual of laws, largely new ones, written nearly 1,000 years after the exodus, we have them represented with the surroundings of the camp in the wilderness, and with representations of the entrance into Caanan being something in the future?

9. How is it that this manual of the form of

worship at the later time discourses at great length about a tabernacle which either never existed or had ceased to exist, and says nothing about the central temple of worship, which at the time of the writer was either about to be built or actually in existence?

10. Why does this manual of post-exilic ritual give minute directions concerning an ark, and make this occupy the central position of divine worship, when at the time of composition of the manual there was no ark in existence, and no prospect of any ark being made in the future? And why does it give directions about the judgment of Urim and Thummim, which also had ceased to exist?

11. If the alleged inconsistencies and repetitions in the Genesis Flood narrative compel us to regard them as a combination of extracts from two or more different books written after the time of Solomon, how is it that we find similar phenomena in the Babylonian Flood narrative, written centuries before the time of Moses?

12. If the Pentateuch and its sources were written within about the same limits of time as the rest of the Old Testament, how is it that we have in it so many peculiar forms and words, and specially the use of a common term for *he* and *she*, almost always in the Pentateuch, and never in any of the books from Joshua to Malachi inclusive?

13. If the Pentateuch was written at so late a date, how is it that the narrative always corresponds in its colouring with the circumstances of the time, as revealed by archæology?

14. If Deuteronomy was written at the time of Josiah, or a little earlier, how is it that we have no mention of Jerusalem or Zion as the place which God had chosen?

15. How is it that we have no reference to the division between the Ten Tribes and the Two? The destruction of the former, because it had forsaken the Mosaic Law, would have been a very natural thing for a devout and patriotic adherent of the Southern kingdom to hint at.

16. How is it that we have no trace of the pre-eminence of Judah? Joseph is the favourite in the blessing of Moses; but his tribe had been carried away captive in the time of Hezekiah. And, on the 'critical' theory, Deuteronomy was composed in the Southern kingdom of Judah, after the captivity of the Northern kingdom.

17. How is it that we have no reference to the Philistines, or to the Assyrians, as the enemies of God's people?

18. How is it that we have no use of the names 'Lord of hosts,' 'The Holy One of Israel,' which are common in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and would have well suited the matter and style of Deuteronomy?

19. How is it that the cities of refuge on

The West of the Jordan are not mentioned, while those on the East side are mentioned (Deut. iv. 41-43, xix. 2-13)? These latter had been for many years out of the hands of the Jews at the time of Manasseh.

Lastly, and specially,

20. If, as many 'critics' maintain, the common people were not made aware of the facts of the case, and were made to believe that D and P were really the words and the Law of Moses, when, as a matter of fact, they were not, how can we believe that deceit can lie at the basis of that Law which our Lord so revered, and of which He said that not one jot or tittle should fail?

21. If, as most, if not all, 'critics' confess, their view of the Old Testament is independent of and different from that which Christ and His Apostles taught, whom is it right and wise to follow, 'the critics' or THE CHRIST?

## CHAPTER VI

### The Authorship of Psalm cx

IN itself the authorship of a particular Psalm is an unimportant matter; but, as we have seen, important issues depend on the question now before us. 'Critics' are almost all agreed that the Psalm was not written by David; but here their agreement ends. Nobody knows who wrote it, or when it was written. Some say it was pre-exilic, some that it was post-exilic, and some that it was written as late as the time of the Maccabees. These conflicting opinions are held by different 'critics,' with the very same *data* before them. It is clear that internal evidence throws but little light on the authorship of the Psalm.

Dr.  
Driver's  
argu-  
ments  
consid-  
ered.

We give in full Dr. Driver's reasons for believing that Ps. cx. was not written by David :—

This Psalm, though it may be ancient, can hardly have been composed by David. If read without *præjudicium*, it produces the irresistible impression of having been written, not by a king with reference to

## THE AUTHORSHIP OF PSALM CX 157

an invisible, spiritual Being standing above him as his superior, but by a prophet *with reference to the theocratic king*.

The word *præjudiciu* is that from which the English word *prejudice* comes, and the meaning is somewhat the same, the difference being that the latter often has an element of *personal feeling* in it, whereas *præjudiciu* has reference purely to *opinion*. It means a pre-conceived principle on which our reasoning is based, and often implies that this principle is baseless. Until recently it has been, practically, the universal belief of Jews and Christians all through the centuries that this Psalm was written by David; hence the sentence we are considering, being used as an argument to prove that the Psalm was not written by David, amounts to this: All the Jews, and practically all the Christians in all the centuries up to the last half of the nineteenth, including the Apostles of Christ, and, in the opinion of almost all Christians of all ages, our Lord Himself, were 'prejudiced' (as far as belief on this matter goes); and it is the present-day 'critics' who are the 'unprejudiced' people. The statement does not appear to be conspicuous by its *modesty*. Moreover, what force is there in the argument at the close of the sentence? Granted that the Psalm was written 'by a prophet with reference to the theocratic king'; why might it not have been



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written by the 'prophet'<sup>1</sup> David? And why might not God's Spirit have given him a foreshadowing of the fact that the 'theocratic king' was not a mere man, but also a 'spiritual Being standing above him'?

It is somewhat amusing to hear of the 'critics' being characterised by a freedom from *præjudici-um*. We ask them whether David wrote Ps. xvi., or xxiii., or xxvii., and many of them will reply: 'No, David was not a devout spiritual man.' Is not that a *præjudici-um*? We ask, Did Samuel utter the words in 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23; the reply is, 'No, such spiritual teaching as this could not have been uttered in such an early age'; is not that a *præjudici-um*? We ask, Was the second half of the Book of Isaiah written by that prophet? The answer is, 'No, a prophet can only speak from the standpoint of his own time'; is not that a *præjudici-um*?<sup>2</sup> *Præjudicia* of this sort abound in 'critical' writings; and when we find in

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> In regard to this latter point, Dr. Maclaren, in his commentary on Ps. xxii. (Expositor's Bible), makes this remark: 'It is somewhat hazardous for those who have not been subjects of prophetic inspiration to lay down canons of what is possible and impossible in it, and there are examples enough to prove that the relation of the prophets' speech to their consciousness and circumstances was singularly complex, and not to be unravelled by any such *obiter dicta* as to psychological possibilities.'

them remarks about the *præjudicia* of the 'traditionalists,' one sees a good illustration of the Bengali proverb, 'The sieve said to the needle, What a large hole you have in your tail.' We 'traditionalists' have our *præjudicium* in these discussions on the Old Testament, and it is a very big one; it is this: 'Christ is always right, and we take the Old Testament as He took it'; the 'critics' practically, and often avowedly, put aside Christ's words on the subject as being either mistaken or an accommodation to popular opinion—they only quote that side of Christ's teaching which, when *superficially* looked at, might seem to favour their own views—they rely upon their own reasonings, or their own unproved principles of interpretation. In a word, our *præjudicium* is 'Christ is right'; the 'critical' *præjudicium* is 'our reasonings and our hypotheses are right.'

Dr. Driver's second argument is this:—

The title 'My Lord,' v. 1, is the one habitually used in addressing the Israelitish king (e.g. 1 Kings i. ii. *passim*).

True, but can it not be used in other cases also? If this argument is sound, as proving that the title could not be used in respect to any one else, so also is the following argument: 'The title "My Lord" is the one habitually used by barristers in addressing the Judge,

therefore they never use it in addressing any one else.' As a matter of fact, this word is used in addressing Abraham, Abraham's servant, Esau, Boaz (Gen. xviii. 12, xxiii. 6, xxiv. 18, xxxii. 5; Ruth ii. 13), and many other persons besides kings.

Dr. Driver proceeds :—

Messianic prophecies have regularly as their point of departure some institution of the Jewish theocracy—the king, the prophet, the people (Isa. xlii. 1, etc.), the high priest, the Temple (Isa. xxviii. 16): the supposition that David is here speaking and addressing a superior, who stands *in no relation with existing institutions*, is not, indeed, impossible (for we are not entitled to limit absolutely the range of prophetic vision), but—contrary to the analogy of prophecy.

It is refreshing to find a 'critic' who acknowledges that God's Spirit is not bound on every occasion to follow the analogy of what He has done on other occasions; the tendency is to lay down rules as to what they think proper or usual, and to insist upon it that God can never act otherwise than on these lines. But the Davidic authorship of the Psalm does not involve anything contrary to Dr. Driver's principle. God had given to David great and somewhat mysterious promises about his 'seed,' his 'house,' his 'kingdom,' which was to be 'established for ever' (2 Sam. vii. 11-16). David, meditating on this 'institution of the Jewish theocracy—the king,' is

## THE AUTHORSHIP OF PSALM CX 161

led by the Spirit of God to have a foreshadowing of the fact that the coming 'king' is to be, not a mere man, but some one exalted to the 'right hand of God.' This Psalm, as written by David, therefore takes the proper 'point of departure' which Driver desiderates.

His next point is :—

The justice of this reasoning is strongly confirmed by verses 3, 5-7, where the subject of the Psalm is actually depicted, not as such a spiritual superior, but as a *victorious Israelitish monarch*, triumphing through Jehovah's help over earthly foes.

Why should not a *poet* like David depict his Lord poetically? And why should not a *warrior king* like David take a 'victorious monarch' as the poetic image which he selects out of other possible images? We have this image of the Messiah in other passages of the Bible; in Ps. ii., in Isa. lxiii. 1-6, and also in the New Testament in Rev. xix. 11-21; and elsewhere.

Dr. Driver proceeds :—

The Psalm is Messianic in the same sense that Ps. ii. is; it depicts the *ideal glory of the theocratic king*, who receives from a prophet the twofold solemn promise (1) of victory over his foes; (2) of a perpetual priesthood (compare Jer. xxx. 21).

There is nothing in this argument to prove

that David might not have written Psalms ii. and cx., both of them.

Dr. Driver concludes thus :—

In the question addressed by our Lord to the Jews (Matt. xxii. 41-46 ; Mark xii. 35-37 ; Luke xx. 41-44), His object, it is evident, is not to instruct them on the *authorship* of the Psalm, but to argue from its *contents* : and though He assumes the Davidic authorship, accepted generally at the time, yet the cogency of His argument is unimpaired, so long as it is recognised that the Psalm is a Messianic one, and that the august language used in it of the Messiah is not compatible with the position of one who was a *mere* human son of David

The best answer to this is to quote the words of Mark xii. 35-37 : 'Jesus answered and said, as He taught in the temple, How say the Scribes that the Christ is the son of David? David *himself* said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet. David *himself* calleth Him Lord, and whence is He his son?' Note the word we have italicised. The Greek is as decisive as the English, 'David *himself*'; 'himself' being emphatically put at the very front of each sentence. Suppose somebody else, say Asaph, had written the Psalm, what sort of logic should we have seen in this argument, '*Asaph* called the Messiah his Lord, therefore He could not have been merely the

son of *David*? If the Psalm had not been written by David, our Lord's reasoning would have been absolutely worthless.

Such is the utmost argument, if argument it may be called, which a learned writer like Dr. Driver has been able to adduce, in order to prove that the Apostles, the Jews, the Christians all through the ages, believed what was untrue about the authorship of this Psalm, until he and his brother 'critics' came to put them all right; and on the strength of such arguments many 'critics' have dared to say that Christ Himself was wrong in His belief on this matter, and that they, in their superior wisdom, can point out the mistake of their Lord and Master, God's sinless Son, filled with His Spirit, whose teaching is the source of all the heavenly light which has blessed this dark world in the last nineteen centuries. Let it be remembered that this is not a matter in which those who live in the light of modern discovery have any advantage over the people of our Lord's time. Dr. Driver's discussion of the matter is *entirely* taken from the Old Testament, substantially the same book as that which was in the hands of Christ and His Apostles. Those who maintain that, with the same materials before them, they can come to a truer conclusion than Christ did, really maintain that they are naturally wiser than He was.

Dr. Maclaren, in his notes on Ps. cx., in the

Dr. Mac-  
laren's  
opinion.

*Expositor's Bible*, says in reference to Dr. Driver's reasoning :—

Our Lord's argument is not drawn from the august language of the Psalm, but from David's relationship to the Messiah, and crumbles to pieces if he is not the singer. It may freely be admitted that there are instances in our Lord's references to the Old Testament in which He speaks from the point of view of His hearers in regard to it; but these are cases in which nothing turned on the question whether that point of view was correct or not. Here everything turns on it; and to maintain that, in so important a crisis, He based His arguments on an error, comes perilously near to imputing fallibility to Him as our teacher. Most of recent writers who advocate the view in question would recoil from such a consequence; but their position is divided from it by a thin line. Whatever the limitations of our Lord's human knowledge, they did not affect His authority in regard to what He did teach; and the present writer ventures to believe that ~~He~~ did teach that *David* in this Psalm calls Messiah his Lord.

It is noteworthy that the word 'my,' which is such an essential part of our Lord's argument, is represented in Hebrew by the single *yod*, which we know from its form *jot* as contained in, 'One *jot* or one tittle of the Law shall in no wise pass away'; and the existence of a jot, we see in the case of this Psalm, makes a very important difference in the meaning—our Lord's reasoning is based entirely upon it.

We have dealt at length on the question of

## THE AUTHORSHIP OF PSALM CX 165

the authorship of this Psalm, because it shows <sup>Importance of the question.</sup> two or three things. First, it shows us how weak are the arguments on which 'critics' will declare the Apostles, and some of them even declare our Lord Himself, to have been wrong where they are right. Next, it shows how 'critical' methods, based on the *præjudicia* of the 'critics,' may lead us perilously near opposing our Lord Himself. It thus raises the question whether these methods can be in accord with the mind of Christ and the truth of God. Relying simply on their own reasonings, 'critics' come to a conclusion which involves one of two things. Either, Christ filled to the utmost with the Spirit of God, and in the full exercise of His Messianic work, having the same materials to guide Him into the truths as the 'critics' have, yet believed and spoke what was untrue, whereas *they* have found out the truth. Or else, He knew what the 'critics' know, and yet, trading on the ignorance of His opponents, He used an argument which He knew was absolutely worthless, in order to gain a cheap victory over them. Many of Christ's humble followers would scorn to do that which this theory represents Him as doing. As we have before seen, in ch. iii., *ad hominem* reasoning has its place, but it is a very subsidiary one. As it has no force in itself, it ought only to be used in connection with really valid arguments,



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and the preacher of the truth should never so use it as to make the hearers believe that he shares those errors of theirs, which he takes hold of in order to show the inconsistency of his opponents.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Historicity and Accuracy of the Old Testament

WE now come to the question whether <sup>Is the O.T. narrative historically true?</sup> the whole of the Old Testament is historically true and accurate or whether it is, according to the 'critical' belief, more or less legendary, mythical, or ideal. In such a matter it does not seem to be right to make sweeping statements to the effect that if the whole of the Bible is not historically true we must give up our faith in Christ and so forth. We must look facts squarely in the face, and form our judgment from them, not from *a priori* statements. The object of the Bible is to teach religious truth, and especially to solve the great practical question, how man can be saved. Religious truth, even in its highest form, can be taught through narratives that are not historically true, as, for instance, in the Parables of our Lord. It is therefore antecedently possible that the whole of God's teaching might have been given

in the form of fictitious narrative; and if it were proved that part of the Old Testament narrative is not historical, this would not detract from its religious value; provided such a statement did not involve moral wrong, or conflict with the teaching of the New Testament.

Moreover, part of the Old Testament is in poetry, and poetry does not profess to be historic. For instance, the Book of Job is a poem, written with the purpose of discussing the solution of the problem how to explain the fact of the sufferings of godly men. There is therefore no reason to infer *from the book itself* that Job ever lived, though this is rendered extremely probable by Ezek. xiv. 14 and Jas. v. 11.

Consider-  
ation of  
Gen. i.-xi.

Perhaps the best plan will be to take the main points of the Bible narrative, and view them in the light of New Testament references. Our greatest difficulty meets us at the commencement, in Gen. i.-xi. It is very difficult to locate the Garden of Eden. Possibly the account is drawn from an antediluvian record,<sup>1</sup> and the contour of the country may have been changed through the Flood. The fact of the creation of man and of the institution of marriage is referred to by our Lord (Mark x. 2-9). The fall is a

<sup>1</sup> Such a suggestion would have seemed absurd fifty years ago, but the art of writing has been traced so far back by archæology that we may assume the possibility of its existence at any time, however remote.

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fact well attested in the New Testament, and the references to it by the Apostle Paul in Rom. v. 12-19; 1 Tim. ii. 14; 2 Cor. xi. 3 are based upon the Bible narrative. But it is perhaps not safe to argue from this that the story of Eden and of the Fall must necessarily have been *literally* true. The description of the New Jerusalem that is to be, in Rev. xxi, xxii, is no doubt figurative, including the reference to the Garden of Eden in xxii. 1, 2; it may therefore be possible that the description of the first Eden may be figurative too. So of the Fall; it may possibly be a figurative representation of the history of the inner soul, by which a creature born sinless became a sinner. But it is truthful even though it may be figurative, and as God's Spirit has seen it wise to put the narrative in this pictorial form, we should deal with it as true, just as we deal with the Parable of the Prodigal son as a true narrative, and learn the lessons it teaches.

At the same time, while we say that it *may be possible*, consistently with our Lord's teaching, that part of the narrative is not literally true, we do not imply that there is any reason to believe this. Adam and Eve, though full-grown, were without experience, and were probably, intellectually, much like full-grown children, with but little power to appreciate abstract reasoning. Is it unnatural that God, instead of giving them

a metaphysical description of the danger of the innocent appetites becoming unduly gratified, and of the free will of man asserting itself against the authority of God, should have put the whole thing in the concrete form of the forbidden fruit? This is the way in which we have to teach children now, why should not God have dealt thus with these two grown-up children?

Our Lord's words in Matt. xxiii. 35 imply that what is said about Abel is historic, which is confirmed by Heb. xi. 4 and 1 John iii. 12.

We come next to the genealogical tables contained in Gen. v. and xi. We have here a twofold difficulty, the longevity of the patriarchs and the chronology. The narrative in Gen. ii. implies that man was created with a bodily constitution not liable to decay before he sinned; it is possible that after his fall it was only gradually that the sin of successive generations increased the tendency to decay, and so lessened the length of life to that which we now have. In regard to the chronology, it is not certain that the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments prove the very great antiquity which is generally inferred from them. Colonel Conder, in *The First Bible* (p. 150), says, 'The Babylonian chronology is not carried, by any catena of evidence, farther back than 2250 B.C., while in Egypt there is no monumental chronology at all. It is rash,

therefore, to assert, that monumental information disagrees with the Old Testament.' Perhaps further archæological discovery may throw more light on the matter.

Dr. Pinches, the eminent archæologist, in a private letter expresses the same opinion, 'I think I may say that the chronology of the Babylonian kings before (say) 2200 B.C. is at present only provisional.' Many archæologists infer from their discoveries that man was living in civilised communities several thousand years before the time of Abraham. This, however, was only an inference. Moreover, the Septuagint text, with which the Samaritan and Josephus to a large extent agree, puts the Flood at 1,300 years and the creation of Adam 3,500 years before the time of Abraham. This would leave time for great increase of population and advance in knowledge, especially when people were fewer and therefore less crowded than they are now. What changes England has seen since the time of Alfred the Great; and that is only 1,000 years ago. And, possibly, some of the strata discovered were antediluvian.

It is also possible that we have not rightly interpreted Gen. v. and xi. There may perhaps be some mystic or figurative meaning about these chapters. A new suggestion has been recently made in regard to the Tower of Babel narrative. Dr. Pinches and Colonel Conder

translate 'land' instead of 'earth' in Gen. xi. 1, and understand the narrative to refer only to the Tigris and Euphrates valley and adjacent land between the mountains and the sea. The 'one language' of this land was the old Akkadian, and the narrative records the introduction of Semitic and other languages into the country. This removes the old difficulty as to the alleged origination of all the languages of the earth at so late a date. It may be that in time we shall find that Gen. v. also has some other meaning than the purely literal one. We submit that the *true* critical position is to reserve judgment for the present, till we have further light.

Abraham  
and the  
Patri-  
archs.

We next come to the Flood. Our Lord expressly speaks of this: 'The flood came and destroyed them all.'<sup>1</sup> It is also referred to elsewhere in the New Testament. Science does not contradict this statement; and some eminent geologists hold that there are scientific reasons for believing it probable that a great flood occurred somewhere about the time of Noah.

We now come to the history of Abraham and his descendants. There is no proof of that narrative being mythical. One argument presented in favour of this theory is that the patriarchs are the embodiment of the Jewish character, and therefore it is likely that they

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvii. 27.

are idealised representations presented in narrative form. This argument, if forcible, would prove that, as the character of Alfred the Great is an embodiment of all that is noblest in the English character, he must be a myth too. And it ignores the modern doctrine of heredity—'modern,' and yet in substance just the old Bible doctrine of the character and fate of man being bound up with that of Adam—the doctrine that strong characteristics in descendants make probable the actual existence of progenitors with the like characteristics.

Another argument is the statement that the account in the Bible may be a representation in narrative form of mythical matter. Even if this were true it will only be a 'may be'; but, as we shall see in the chapter on '*Critical Methods*', 'critics' are very fond of turning *may* be into *must* be.

Others say that the narrative is idealised, that is, it is simply based on fact, and facts are coloured and teaching inserted which represented the religious ideas of the writers many centuries later. But this is a mere statement, representing the ideas of the 'critics'; it is based on no solid argument. There is no proof whatever that the narrative is imaginary in any respect; and every reader has just as much right to say that he thinks the narrative true as the 'critic' has to say that he thinks it is not true.



But those who think it true have some reasons to give. In the first place, the narrative, in its magnificent simplicity, appeals to the heart as true. At the present time it may be that the force of this argument is lessened by the large number of graphic tales which are written nowadays. But old men can remember that in their boyhood there was not a tenth part of the story-writing which we have now; and before the Waverley Novels were written there was very much less than there was even sixty years ago.

In the next place, the patriarchal narrative is perfectly in accord with the circumstances of the times, as revealed in the recent discoveries of archæology. Prof. Sayce, in the *Homiletic Review* for March, 1903, writes:—

There is another reason why the method of the 'higher critic' cannot lead to solid results. It is unscientific. . . . When therefore the 'higher critic' affirms that he has disproved the historical existence of the Hebrew patriarchs, we must answer that his so-called proofs are historically and scientifically inadmissible. In historical matters we must have recourse to historical testimony, which, when early Oriental history is concerned, is necessarily archæological. The archæologist, and not the philologist or literary critic, is alone qualified to decide them. And in the case of the Hebrew patriarchs the pronouncement of archæology is unmistakable. Wherever archæological facts have come to light, which

bear on the history of the patriarchs, they have gone to confirm it. In no instance have they supported the conclusions of the 'higher critic.' One by one, on the contrary, have his assertions been disproved.

We have seen that many other prominent archæologists, Babylonian or Egyptian, give the same testimony as to the probable truthfulness of the narrative. It would be extremely difficult for writers a thousand years later, in a different country, to show the truthfulness to date which the Bible narrative shows; anachronisms are so natural to all writers.

Lastly, and chiefly, we have the testimony of our Lord. 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.'<sup>1</sup> 'Have ye not read in the book of Moses . . . how God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the *living*.'<sup>2</sup> What a contrast between these words of the Master and Wellhausen's description of Abraham as 'a free creation of unconscious art.'

Much the same may be said of the subsequent Old Testament narrative. There is no argument whatever to prove it unhistorical; it accords with the circumstances of the times, as revealed by archæology; and in many details it is

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xii. 26, 27.

confirmed by the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. Our Lord refers to the manifestation of God at the Bush, the giving of the manna, the brazen serpent, the history of David, of Elijah and Elisha, and so forth. Most 'critics' acknowledge that the history from Joshua to Nehemiah is in the main historical, except the Books of Chronicles; and we have endeavoured to show in chapter iv. that there is no reason to discredit these books. Esther is by many supposed to be unhistorical, but even Dr. Driver acknowledges that 'the narrative cannot reasonably be doubted to have a substantial historical basis,'<sup>1</sup> and the Rev. J. Urquhart has shown how remarkably it accords with the circumstances of the times in many respects.

**The Book  
of Jonah.**

We have already referred to the Book of Job. The Book of Daniel will be treated separately; Jonah remains to be considered. The book begins in Hebrew with the word 'and,' which connects it with something preceding, and seems to imply that it is not a mere story with a moral, but that it is part of a definite narrative, on a par with other Bible narratives, and therefore probably true. Our Lord has an utterance in regard to the book, and, as His disciples, we must consider what His words imply: 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Bible: Esther.*

be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.<sup>1</sup>

Let us begin with the first of these two points. A mere sign may point to what is unhistorical, as a Christian preacher might illustrate his subject by referring to some story about Hercules or Ulysses. We can, therefore, hardly say that our Lord's words *necessarily* imply the truth of the story; but as Jonah was an historic person this reference to him makes it most probable that He knew the story to be true.

And why should it not be true? The Apostle Paul asked, 'Why is it judged incredible with you if God doth raise the dead?'<sup>2</sup> God did really raise Christ from the dead; in itself and in its consequences this is one of the most stupendous facts in the world's history, in the history of the universe; 'why is it judged incredible' that, as part of God's preparation in history and type and prophecy leading on to the Christ, that most stupendous event should be prefigured by a most remarkable miracle,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 39-41.      <sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 8.

as recorded in regard to Jonah? In respect to the second reference of our Lord, however, it is difficult to see what stronger affirmation could possibly be given as to the historical truth of the mission of Jonah and the repentance of the Ninevites than the words: 'The men of Nineveh *shall rise up in the judgment* with this generation and shall condemn it: for *they repented at the preaching of Jonah*; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.' Can we imagine a Christian preacher saying solemnly to his audience, 'If you live selfish lives, I tell you that Little Lord Fauntleroy and John Halifax, Gentleman, will rise up in the judgment with you and will condemn you'? Yet, if the mission of Jonah were not historical, the 'men of Nineveh who repented' would be as imaginary personages as are the two heroes of novels whose names have just been mentioned. Dr. Sayce says that 'the fast ordained by the King of Nineveh finds its parallel in the cuneiform tablets.'<sup>1</sup>

There is one moral question attached to the historic truthfulness of the Old Testament narrative. It is this: Did the writers attempt to deceive their readers or not? If a man writes what everybody knows to be a novel, his action is morally right; but if he writes

<sup>1</sup> *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 489.

a fictitious history and tries to make his hearers believe that it is true, he attempts to deceive them, and thus does what is morally wrong. In like manner, if the history of the Antediluvians, for instance, is really legendary but the author believed it to be true, or acknowledged that it was legendary, then he was not to blame; but if he attempted to deceive people as to the matter, he was morally wrong. Dr. Driver's theory about Deuteronomy, as we understand it, is that it is probably based on a true record of what Moses said; and that, some centuries afterwards, another prophet, by divine inspiration, added considerably to it, altering and adapting it to the needs of his time. If this was well known when the book was issued, there was no deception, and no moral stain on the origin of the book. But there is another theory; it is this, if we understand it aright: some one at the time of Josiah wrote the book, which he thought would be very useful under the circumstances of the time, hid it in the Temple, and then managed to 'find' it there, and brought it to the king, telling him that he had found the Law of Moses, and thus, by his forgery, frightened the king into doing what the writer thought he ought to do. Some 'critics' think this fine statesmanship, 'fully worthy of an inspired teacher and statesman'—it has been called; a common-sense<sup>1</sup> man, we fancy, will

The Bible  
and  
science.

in Gen. i. *contradict* the teaching of modern science? This question can be very easily answered. In 1885-6 there was a magazine controversy on the subject between Mr. Gladstone and Prof. Huxley. The former maintained that Gen. i. does not contradict science; Huxley maintained that it did. Every one knows what a scientific authority Huxley was, and how hard he hit in argument; but he could only adduce *one* alleged inconsistency with science, and that a small one. His argument was this: it is said that 'creeping things on the earth' were not created till the sixth period of creation (Gen. i. 25); lizards are 'creeping things' (Lev. xi. 29, 30); but geology shows that lizards existed before the period in which man first appears. Prof. Huxley was not aware that two *different* Hebrew words are used in the two passages for 'creeping.' Moreover, it is not said in Gen. i. that *no* creeping things were created before the sixth day, but only that 'creeping things' were a marked portion of the sixth day's work. If Prof. Huxley could find practically no inconsistency between Genesis and science, even in the stress of a public argument, we may rest assured that there is none. An authority like Prof. Dana wrote, 'I agree in all essential points with Mr. Gladstone, and I believe that the first chapter of Genesis and science are in accord.'

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The late Sir W. Dawson was an eminent geologist, and in the *Expositor* of 1894 he said that there are six stages in creation in the Genesis account :—1. Light. 2. Distinction between clouds and water, with air between. 3. Earth's crust ridged up to form continents, vegetation. 4. Heavenly bodies seen, by concentration of light. These are not gods, but measures of time. 5. Water animals, reptiles, birds. 6. Mammals become dominant; man. He adds: 'It would not be easy, even now, to construct a statement of the development of the world in popular terms so concise and so accurate.'

Here, then, we have a definite fact. Some writer of over 2,000 years ago gave an account of the creation. He knew nothing of modern science, and yet his account is of such a character that, whilst it was not opposed to the settled science of his time, nor of subsequent times, it is found also not to be opposed to the science of the present century, and is even said by eminent geologists to be actually in striking accord with it. How are we to account for this undoubted fact? The 'traditional' theory accounts for it by saying that God's Spirit so worked upon the mind of the writer that, while not interfering with his beliefs, He yet led him to use such language as would not be untrue, even in relation to



science. Has any one any better explanation to offer ?<sup>1</sup>

Much the same may be said in regard to the other references to science in the Bible. They are all made by men who knew nothing of modern science, and yet they are not opposed to it. It is true that we meet with references to 'the swift serpent'<sup>2</sup> and other expressions, which may refer to the mythical creatures of the cosmogony of the time, but these expressions occur in poetry, or in the 'lofty and impassioned prose' of the prophets; and therefore may be treated as poetical. The question before us now is not What did the writers think? But it is this, 'Does the Bible as it now stands contain anything untrue?' When we answer this question we must interpret poetry poetically.

The nearest approach to scientific error, we believe, is the putting of the hare among the animals that chew the cud.<sup>3</sup> But we all know that the Bible speaks in popular, not in scientific, language, as we do when we speak of the sun rising and setting. If a Jew wanted to know what he might eat, he could not examine an

<sup>1</sup> The author of *Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* a disciple of Robertson Smith, writes: 'God's Spirit so guided the inspired writers as, while not relating science, yet not to contradict fact or be inconsistent with the truth when discovered.'

<sup>2</sup> Job xxvi. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xi. 6.

animal anatomically, but he could see whether the hoof was cleft, and whether the jaw moved in a certain way. It has, however, been recently stated that after all the hare is a ruminant.<sup>1</sup>

It is certainly remarkable how difficult it is to find anything opposed to science in the Bible. Note one instance. The Apostle Peter and Clement of Rome were contemporaries; both of them speak of the Resurrection; Clement probably was the better educated of the two; yet Clement speaks of the phoenix and the myth about it as an actual fact, but Peter makes no such mistake. This characteristic of the Bible is still more marked when we compare it with the mistakes in the sacred books of other religions. We may refer to the Hindu cosmogony, with its circle of seven seas round the dry land, composed of salt water, buttermilk, treacle, etc., and its description of the earth as resting on the tortoise and the four elephants and the unending snake. What a contrast to this are the sublime words, 'He stretcheth out the north over *empty space* and hangeth the earth *upon nothing*.'<sup>2</sup> The Koran says of Dhoulkarnain, 'We [*i.e.* God] gave him a means to accomplish every end, so he followed his way, until when he reached the

<sup>1</sup> The *Life of Faith* refers to the testimony of Prof. Rutimeyer, of Basel, quoted in *Wissen und Glauben*, May, 1903, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Job. xxvi. 7.

setting of the sun, he found it to *set in a miry fount.*<sup>1</sup> We have nothing like this in the Bible.

**The Bible  
and secular his-  
tory.**

What has been said about the Bible references to science may also be said in regard to secular history. The Bible touches this on many points in reference to events, times, customs, and so forth. In the last fifty years our knowledge of the countries with which Israel came into contact has been enormously increased; in many respects the truthfulness of the Bible narrative has been confirmed, and in hardly any case has it told against its accuracy. The chief difficulty which it has intensified has been in regard to the chronology of Gen. i.-xi., to which we referred pp. 170-172. The general accuracy of the Bible, where it touches on science and secular history, is all the more remarkable when we remember that it does not rest upon the carefulness of one man, but characterises a volume which is made up of sixty-six different books, written by over thirty different persons, covering a period of nearly 1,000 years even on the 'critical' hypothesis. Is there any other adequate explanation than this, that God's Spirit so inspired them all as to make them accurate in all that they said?

In regard to the apparent inconsistency of Bible statements with other statements of the

<sup>1</sup> Sura xviii. (The Cave), 84.

book, or with secular records, we must remember some things. Statements at first sight contradictory are often reconciled when we know all the circumstances of the case.<sup>1</sup> Another point to be remembered is, that our knowledge of the events of Bible times, and of the manners and customs of the people then, is imperfect, and is being continually enlarged and sometimes modified or corrected by the new, and often important, discoveries which every year is revealing. It is quite possible that what present-day 'critics' call mistakes, the next generation of 'critics' will acknowledge to be unquestionably true. It may be that the new difficulties which have arisen in the last forty years will be solved by further discoveries.<sup>2</sup>

There are in the Bible far fewer apparent discrepancies, with other Bible passages and with general history and science, than is usually imagined. Many of the objections brought against the absolute truthfulness of the Bible are really puerile in their weakness. Mistakes

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Westcott, in his *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, writes: 'Even in those passages which present the greatest difficulties there are traces of unrecorded facts which, if known fully, would probably explain the whole. And, besides all this, there are so many tokens of unrecorded facts in the brief summaries which are preserved, that no argument can be based upon apparent discrepancies sufficient to prove the existence of absolute error.'

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, on *Archæological Discovery*.

have been assumed where it seemed difficult to see any, until it almost appears as if in place of the good old maxim, 'Assume a man innocent till he is proved guilty,' we have in the arguments of many objectors the maxim, 'Assume that the Bible is wrong except where it can be proved that it is right.' The idea that there are many mistakes in the Bible is 'in the air,' and many people seem to take it for granted. Dr. Strong, the author of a valuable book on Systematic Theology, writes: 'I have carefully examined, one after another, the so-called contradictions between different historical books of the Bible, and I have yet to find one where some reasonable hypothesis will not furnish a reconciliation.'

Are the  
monu-  
ments in-  
errant.

Another point is this: 'Critics' generally, if not always, assume that when the monuments of Babylonia, Egypt, and other regions differ from the Bible, the Bible must be wrong. Is it fair thus, in place of the inerrancy of the Bible, to assume the inerrancy of the monuments, and also of the decipherment which is made of those words and clauses in the monuments of which the interpretation is not perfectly clear? When despotic heathen kings record their own doings, or courtiers the doings of their kings, or annalists the doings of their national heroes, past or present, are they not as likely to make incorrect statements as impartial men, of

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other nationalities, moved by the Spirit of God?<sup>1</sup>

In reference to the historicity and accuracy of the Bible narrative one important point must be remembered. Fifty years ago it was thought that the patriarchs and the early Jews lived in a time of darkness, when writing was little, if at all, known, and therefore the Bible narratives must have been handed down by tradition, and might have become largely mixed with error in the course of generations. Archæology since then has revealed the fact that what used to be thought a time of darkness was really a literary age, the art of writing was known long before the time of Moses. Not only so, but this writing was put, not on perishable material like paper or parchment, but on clay tablets that may last indefinitely, and many of which are now being deciphered three or four thousand years after they were written. Also, there were libraries where these tablets were deposited. It was therefore possible for the writers of history to refer, not only to modern editions of ancient books, as we can now-a-days, but to contemporary tablets, actually written at the time of the occurrences narrated.

The Bible may be based on historical records.

This increases the probability of the truthfulness of the Bible narrative. The compiler of Genesis might have had access to a number

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, on *Archæological Discovery*.

of contemporaneous historical records; and family records of this kind might have been written and handed down by Abraham and his descendants. At the time of Moses the cuneiform script was used as a sort of common language by well educated people over the then civilised world, from Babylonia to Egypt. It was in use for many centuries after that. 'The authors of the Book of Kings and Book of Chronicles constantly appeal to ancient authorities, and to lists drawn up in the time of David and of later kings, as though still extant during and after the captivity.'<sup>1</sup>

Archæology has also taught us another thing. Some 'critics' used to argue that there are in the Old Testament points of similarity with Babylonian customs or beliefs, and that this shows that the books in which these appear must have been written after the Babylonian exile. We learn from recent archæology that there was contact between Canaan and Babylonia at the time of Abraham, and before and after it; so that it is quite as possible that Babylonian influences may have been exerted in very early times, and therefore the books may have been written in early times too. The existence of Aramaic words in a book used to be considered a proof of late date; we cannot make this inference any longer.

<sup>1</sup> Conder, *The First Bible*, p. 22.

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Let us now carry our thoughts, back a ~~hundred~~ <sup>sixty</sup>—or even ~~only~~ <sup>years ago</sup> sixty—years, to a time <sup>and now.</sup> well within the memory of many now living. At that time, what ~~did~~ the world know about ancient history? Practically the only histories we knew were those of Greece and Rome, and of some other countries, in as far as they formed part of Greek and Roman history. Of this, even, we practically knew nothing before about 500 or 600 B.C. Beyond this, as we looked back, the landscape was covered with mist, which speedily became impenetrable. A few dim figures, like Romulus and Remus, Minos and Menes, floated here and there, but we did not know whether they were real men or not, and thought they probably were fabulous. Living history seemed to emerge out of a mist which no eyes could penetrate.

There was only one exception to this rule. One book professed to give the history of mankind even from the creation, and to reach back to certainly 4000 and possibly 5700 B.C. It was not a book of speculation and discussion, but it was the most positive book in the world. There was not a single 'perhaps' or 'per-adventure' in its narrative from beginning to end. Its statements were given as if they were absolutely and undoubtedly true. It was no dry chronicle, but full of minute detail, so that Abraham and Joseph and David came before



us as no mythical personages, but as men whom we knew in the incidents of their daily life.

The question was asked, 'Is this narrative true?' The book, for the most part, quoted no authorities, and those which were quoted were inaccessible. The book simply made 'definite statements, and left these to speak for themselves. Those who received it as true had only one reason for doing so; it was this, 'Jesus Christ and His Apostles believed it, and therefore we believe it.' The outside world said the book had no authority at all; and, moreover, its truthfulness was very doubtful. The art of writing could not have been in existence before 1000 B.C.; and hence a large part of the narrative was a mere matter of tradition and could not be relied upon. The book presupposed a state of civilisation which could not have existed in such rude times as those which preceded 1000 B.C. And there were many improbabilities in the book. The long lives of the patriarchs constituted one. The statement that Babylon was founded by Hamites<sup>1</sup> was another, for it was well known that the Babylonians were Semitic. The narrative in Gen. xiv. was exceedingly improbable, if not impossible. The Bible speaks much, men said, about such people as Hittites and Amorites, of whom ancient history knows nothing. It

<sup>1</sup> Gen. x. 6-12.

speaks of men like Sargon, So, Rul, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede, who are unhistorical. The taxing in the time of Cyrenius,<sup>1</sup> and the title 'proconsul' in Acts xiii. 7, are clearly inconsistent with Roman history. There are many such mistakes; the book is clearly unhistorical. So said the unbelievers.

Suppose, now, that sixty or a hundred years ago it had been known for certain that, before the end of the nineteenth century, the mists of the past would be rolled away, the ancient history of Babylonia and Egypt for thousands of years would be revealed, the political history and the private life to a large extent of people two thousand and more years before Christ would be made known. How interested we should all have been in the question, 'Will the Bible narrative stand the test?' Its enemies would have said exultingly, 'The bubble will soon burst.' Weak believers would have trembled for the ark of God; but those strong in faith would have rested in the word of Christ and His Apostles, and would have feared as little as those who live in a granite house, high up on an immovable rock, fear the howling of the wind and the raging of the waves.

The curtain rises, the mists clear away, and what do we behold? The art of writing, instead of reaching only a short way before Christ,

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 2.

reaches for millenniums; and the writing was on an imperishable material which has lasted four thousand years or longer. The early ages, so far as we can trace them back through these millenniums, were civilised and literate. In almost all the points of objection to which we have referred it was the Bible that was right and the objectors who were wrong. It has been found that the early history of the Bible corresponds completely with the history and social conditions of the times, its names are like the names of men of the time, its surroundings are the surroundings of the time. The narrative of the Bible relates almost entirely to events occurring in Canaan, Egypt, and the wilderness between these countries; and wherever we have been able to compare the narrative with the condition of these countries, as shown by the monuments, we find that the two agree with one another. Could we have a stronger proof of the historicity and general accuracy of the Bible narrative? Very little, if anything, has been found which is definitely opposed to the monuments, unless it be in regard to numbers; these are specially liable to copyists' errors, and the monuments are not necessarily infallible. Some think certain statements improbable, but, as a matter of fact, the improbable often happens. Most of the difficulties we have just referred to have been not only met, but have become

arguments in favour of the truthfulness of the Bible. And if we find some difficulties still, such as those we have referred to in regard to the genealogy and chronology of Gen. v. and xi., which is the more truly *critical* position—to say, ‘We cannot reconcile these with archæology, therefore *nobody ever will be able to do so*,’ or to say, ‘The Bible has so often been said to be wrong, and has been eventually proved to be right, so many difficulties have been cleared away, that we will wait a little before pronouncing judgment, and see whether these present difficulties will not in time vanish, as so many others have already done’?<sup>1</sup>

Reviewing the whole question, in regard to the historicity and minute accuracy of the Bible narrative, we may lay down the following general principles, based on the position that our Lord’s reference to the Scripture as something that ‘cannot be broken,’ does not *necessarily* refer to anything except its religious teaching. Three practical points.

1 In reference to the absolute accuracy, on *all* points, secular and religious, of the Bible narrative it is wise at present to reserve judgment; neither positively to assert it nor positively to deny it.

2. We should refuse to discuss with a non-believer the question of the accuracy of the Bible on secular subjects, as if it were an

<sup>1</sup> Col. Conder’s pamphlet on ‘Bible Accuracy,’ in the *Twentieth-century Papers*, is worth consulting.

important matter. The non-believer has nothing to do with questions about the inspiration of the Bible; he has to deal only with the great facts of Christ being the Saviour from sin, which is clearly revealed in the Bible, even if there be some inaccuracies in it in details. This is one of the great advantages we have gained by the criticism of the last half-century. We no longer feel compelled, as we did fifty years ago, to defend every small outpost of the Bible citadel, as if the fate of the whole book and all it contained rested upon its absolute immunity from all error of every kind. In dealing with outsiders we have to preach an almighty Saviour, not an infallible book.

3. Whether men think the Bible historical and absolutely true in all points or not, the way to deal with it practically is to *treat it as true*. In secular literature—with regard to the moral lessons to be learnt from such works as Macbeth, King Lear, John Halifax—we have to treat the books as true if we would learn these lessons. So it is also in regard to the New Testament parables. God has revealed His will in the Bible in the form of a narrative, and the only way in which we can learn the lessons it is intended to teach is to treat the narrative as being true.

This view is strongly expressed by Dr. Driver in his Commentary on Genesis: 'The

religious value of the narratives of Genesis, while it must be placed upon a different basis from that on which it has hitherto been commonly considered ~~to~~ rest, remains in itself *essentially unchanged*. It is true, we often *cannot get behind the narratives*; we are obliged consequently *to take them as we find them*, and read them accordingly. And then we shall find that the narratives of Genesis teach us still the same lessons which they taught our forefathers. The drama which begins with the tragedy of Eden and ends with the wonderful biography of Joseph is still enacted before our eyes as vividly as ever. Eve and Cain still stand before us, the immortal types of weakness yielding to temptation, and of an unbridled temper leading its victim he knows not whither; Noah and Abraham are still the heroes of righteousness and faith; Lot and Laban, Sarah and Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, in their characters and experiences, are still in different ways *τύποι ἡμῶν* (1 Cor. x. 6), and still in one respect or another exemplify the ways in which God deals with the individual soul, and the manner in which the individual soul ought—or ought not—to respond to His leadings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Genesis*. S. R. Driver. Third edition, p. lxxviii. (The italics are Dr. Driver's.)

## CHAPTER VIII

### The authoritativeness of the Old Testament

THE old view on this subject is that the religious teaching of the Old Testament is as truly authoritative as that of the New: in the one case as in the other it is the teaching of God. Most 'critics' now hold that the Old Testament teaching is a mixture of truth and error, the truth gradually gaining ground on the error; and that the whole is to be tested by the words of Christ, as the authoritative standard. Here, too, we must keep to our main principle, 'Christ is true,' and we must ask what we may gather from His teaching as to the authority of the Old Testament. Devout 'critics' cannot object to our thus acting; because, if each point of Old Testament teaching is to be tested by Christ's words, the question whether the Old Testament *as a whole* is authoritative or not must also be tested by His words. We have already called attention to the way in which

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our Lord not only said that 'the Scripture cannot be broken,' but also constantly referred to it as the arbiter to settle points at issue; and, whilst He strongly blamed the Jews for following tradition, when it contradicted the Old Testament Scripture, yet He never once hinted that they were wrong in regarding that Scripture itself as authoritative. This seems to settle the matter for those who wish to act as true 'disciples' of Christ.

But we may still ask on what lines we are to define the authority of the book. Certainly not on the principle that everything that is contained in the Old Testament is the Word of God; for, if so, we must regard the words of Job's friends as being an infallible statement of God's truth, though He said to them, 'Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right';<sup>1</sup> and we must even receive as divinely inspired the words of Satan himself!<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, the authoritativeness of the Old Testament simply means that it is an unerring record of what men said and did. Where Jehovah is represented as Himself speaking, or where true prophets spoke with a 'Thus saith the Lord,' we have the direct words of God; in other cases we have to consider whether the words we read are probably inspired by the Spirit of God or not. The Bible by no means implies approval of all the actions,

<sup>1</sup> Job xlii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Job i. 9-11, ii. 4, 5.



even of good people, which it records, nor does it imply approval of everything which good men say. Our Lord does not confine the authoritativeness of the Old Testament Scripture to the express words of God. Thus, in Matt. xix. 3-9 and Mark x. 2-9, He quoted from Gen. i. 27 and ii. 24. We may note by the way that the first passage comes from that part of the Pentateuch which 'critics' ascribe to P, and the second from J E; yet our Lord makes no distinction between them. The words in Gen. i. 27 are those of the writer of the narrative; the words in ii. 24 are either those of the writer or of Adam; and yet our Lord quotes them both as authoritative, and the latter of them as being really the word of God Himself, 'He who made them from the beginning . . . said, For this cause,' etc.; and 'What *God* hath joined together.' Thus the words of the writer of the narrative, or of Adam, are quoted as the words of God Himself. We shall also see that our Lord quoted two Psalms as part of the Law.

From this point of view we might be inclined to say that everything in the Old Testament is the real word of God. But one truth generally needs to be balanced by its complementary truth, and we have on the other side the fact we have referred to, that the words of Satan and of Job's friends cannot be

the 'word of God.' We have also to remember that a true prophet like Jonah said, 'I do well to be angry, even unto death,'<sup>1</sup> which was certainly not in accord with the Spirit of God; and Moses 'spoke unadvisedly with his lips.'<sup>2</sup> Not every statement in the Book of Ecclesiastes is true; that book gives us the perplexed reasonings of the writer, in view of the mysteries of Providence; in his groping after light he utters such sentences as, 'Man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts,' 'Of the wise man, even as of the fool, there is no remembrance for ever.' These words do not teach the truth of God, they represent the hasty words spoken by the writer in his way towards the great truth with which he ends, 'Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.'<sup>3</sup> If we have these gropings after truth, rather than the distinct utterance of it, in Ecclesiastes, may we not also have it in the Psalms? These latter do not come definitely with a 'Thus saith the Lord,' like the words of the prophets; they represent the feelings of men who were true believers, yet were imperfect in their beliefs and in their feelings.

This may be said on the one side; on the other we may ask, If our Lord treated Ps. lxxxii. as the authoritative word of God, why is not

<sup>1</sup> Jonah iv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cvi. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Eccles. iii. 19, ii. 16, xii. 13.

this true also of Ps. cix., cxxxvii., and other similar Psalms, which we call 'Imprecatory'? This question is a difficult one, and it shows us that while, on the one hand, our Lord's teaching distinctly represents the Old Testament as an authoritative revelation of the will of God, it is, on the other hand, necessary in reading it to seek continually the guidance of God's Spirit in order that He may enable us to interpret its teaching aright.

**The im-  
precatory  
Psalms.**

When we consider that the Psalms were all written more than two thousand, and many of them probably nearly three thousand, years ago, it is very remarkable how thoroughly they represent the deepest experience of believing men in all ages, and how very little there is in them which seems to grate on Christian feeling. Probably what are called the 'Imprecatory Psalms' are about the only ones that contain words which we somewhat hesitate to use; but some of these very Psalms are expressly quoted by the Apostles as the word of God, in the same way in which they quote other passages of the Old Testament. Thus we have Ps. lxix. and cix. quoted by the Apostle Peter (Acts i. 20) and Ps. lxix. by the Apostle Paul (Rom. xi. 9). And in John xv. 25 we even have such words as the following quoted by our Lord Himself: 'This cometh to pass *that the word may be fulfilled* that is

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*written in their law*, They hated Me without a cause.' These words may be quoted either from Ps. xxxv. 19—in which Psalm verses 4-8, 26 are 'imprecatory'—or from Ps. lxix. 4—in which Psalm verses 22-28 are 'imprecatory,' and verses 9 and 21 are expressly quoted in the New Testament as having been fulfilled in our Lord's history.<sup>1</sup>

We may acknowledge that these imprecatory passages are on a lower level than some New Testament teaching, but we must remember that one aspect of religious teaching may be on a lower level than another, and yet both may be right; and there may be times when the lower truth is practically more suitable than the higher. It is our duty to take good care of the bodies which God has given us to use in His service; it is also our duty, if need be, to 'lay down our lives for the brethren.' The latter is on a higher level than the former, but the former is generally the level on which it is wise for us to walk. Just so, the prayer in regard to the Psalmist's enemies, 'Hold them guilty, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; thrust them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against Thee,' is on a lower level than, 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you' (Ps. v. 10; Matt. v. 44); but

Old  
Testament  
Morality.

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 17; Rom. xv. 3; John xix. 28-30.

it is not necessarily wrong, and in some states of society it is an aspect of right that must be insisted on. It appeals to that sense of *justice* which makes us instinctively wish, when we hear of a dastardly crime, that its perpetrator may be discovered and punished. It is one of the attributes of God Himself, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who gave His life for us, and so strongly enforced the supreme duty of love, is also He who said, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' and who hereafter, on the authority of His own word, will 'say unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.'<sup>1</sup> In the Book of Revelation the heavenly host are represented as saying, 'Amen, Hallelujah,' at the view of the final punishment of God's enemies.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, while acknowledging that there is much in the Old Testament which is on a lower level than the New, this does not imply that the old is wrong; and it must be remembered that much of the Old Testament is on a very high level. It is not easy to rise higher than the two commandments on which 'the whole law hangeth, and the prophets,' the two great commandments: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii. 13, xxv. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xix. 1-4. See Appendix B.

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God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'<sup>1</sup> The duty of loving one's enemy, one of the highest precepts of the Gospel, is also found in the Old Testament in Exod. xxiii. 4, 5 and Prov. xxv. 21. And such utterances as Ps. xxiii. and ciii. and Isa. liii. reach the highest level of inspiration.

It has been maintained that the command to destroy the Canaanites cannot have come from God. But what reason can be urged for this? It is certain that God had a right to destroy them if He willed so to do. He who gave life can take it away, even from animals who have not sinned; surely, then, He may take it away from sinful men. It was not wrong for God to destroy the inhabitants of St. Pierre, innocent children included. There is nothing more wrong in destroying by the sword than in doing so by a volcanic eruption. No violation<sup>2</sup> was done to the conscience of the Israelites by the command, for to obey God implicitly is the essence of right; He never commands what is wrong; and the essence of sin is the breaking of God's law!

But it is asked, 'Is it possible that God could have given such a command?' In reply to this,

<sup>1</sup> Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xxii. 37-40.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iii. 4.

let us remember that the Bible representation of the case is that the Canaanites were exceptionally wicked, their iniquity was not full in the time of Abraham,<sup>1</sup> but it had come to its fulness in the time of Moses. The people were a plague-spot, to be stamped out in the moral interests of the human race. Be it remembered also that God's plan was to train the people of Israel to manifest Him among men, and for this end He purposed to put the seedling into ground free from thorns which would choke it, to remove Israel as much as possible from surrounding temptation. Israel refused to obey God's command for the destruction of the Canaanites; and what was the result? The Israelites yielded to the evil influences around them, and for seven hundred years or more they were constantly falling into idolatry; the Ten Tribes were carried into captivity and nothing definite has been heard of them since; and the Two Tribes had to pass through the furnace of the exile before they could be purified from their idolatry. All this might possibly have been spared, if only they had obeyed God's command to destroy the Canaanites.

Besides, if God did not give this command, who did? Was it Moses? He was 'very meek, above all the men which were upon the

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xv. 16.

## AUTHORITATIVENESS OF THE O.T. 207,

face of the earth!''<sup>1</sup> Was it the instinct of the Israelites themselves, which they thought to have come from God? If so, why did they not obey the command which their own instincts had prompted?

<sup>1</sup> Num. xii. 3.



## CHAPTER IX

### The Book of Daniel

The Book  
as it is.

WE will next consider the *historicity of the Book of Daniel*. Looking at the book as it is, we see that it does not claim, as a whole, to have been written by Daniel. It contains two parts; ch. i.—vi. are in the historical form, expressed in the third persons; ch. vii.—xii. are in the autobiographical form, expressed in the first person. It is possible, therefore, that the book might have been brought out by some one who wrote the first six chapters, and incorporated the last six as a genuine piece of autobiography, just as the editors of the four-volume Life of C. H. Spurgeon incorporate some autobiographical chapters. Looking at the book linguistically, we see that ch. ii. 4—vii. 28 is written in Aramaic, the rest in Hebrew. Several explanations have been given of this fact; but none of them are sufficiently established to make it necessary that we should deal with them.

When  
was it  
written?

In regard to the historical accuracy of the book, we need not spend much time on the

question *when* the book was written. A true narrative may be written centuries after the events narrated, provided the writer has trustworthy sources on which to base it. The 'critics maintain that the language used in the book makes it very probable, if not certain,<sup>1</sup> that it was written centuries after Daniel's time. An equally good scholar, Dr. Pusey, maintained the exactly opposite opinion; and at the present day Professor Margoliouth, of Oxford, also believes in the earlier date of Daniel. Even if there are words in the book of a later date than that of Daniel, this would not prove that it was written after his time; because a later editor might have somewhat modernised the style. Chaucer, put into modern English, would be Chaucer still; the real author would be the writer, not the moderniser.

Let us now consider some of the grounds on which the historical truthfulness of the book is attacked.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Driver says that the two or three Greek names of musical instruments in Dan. iii. 5, *demand* a date after Alexander the Great for the composition of the book. How is it possible to *prove* that two or three Greek instruments were not used in Babylon before that date? To prove a negative is proverbially difficult. And Col. Conder, an archaeologist, maintains that the three words, and other words used in Daniel, are probably derived from the very ancient Akkadian language, which preceded the Semitic language of Babylonia. If this be so, they point to the time of Cyrus rather than of Antiochus as the probable date of the composition of the book. See Appendix C.

Its place  
in the  
Hebrew  
Bible.

It is asked why, if the book is prophetic, it is not put with the other Prophets in the Hebrew Bible. It is always difficult to state the reason why unknown people two thousand years ago did or did not do a certain thing. 'Critics' are generally ready to give the definite reason, and somehow it always is a reason which suits their own views.<sup>1</sup> True criticism is ever cautious, and never hesitates to say, in regard to many things, 'We do not know.' But we suggest that a sufficient answer *may be* that Daniel was not a 'prophet,' in the ordinary sense of being a man who speaks in God's name to His people, urging them to hold fast their steadfastness to God; but he was a seer of visions which are recorded.

Historicity of  
Chapters  
v., vi.

The chief brunt of the attack on the historicity of the book has to be borne by the narrative contained in ch. v., vi. A good deal has been 'read into' this narrative by expositors, who believed the story, told by Herodotus, of Cyrus deflecting the waters of the Euphrates, and thus getting into the city while the defenders were feasting, which story seemed admirably to fit in with the account in Daniel; and it was unconsciously assumed that the story of Daniel implied all this. But this is not the case. What the narrative states is:—

<sup>1</sup> Instances of this will be given in the chapter on 'Critical Methods.'

1. Belshazzar the king made a feast, at which Daniel revealed the meaning of the inscription on the wall.

2. That night Belshazzar was slain.

3. Afterwards Darius the Mede received the kingdom.

There is nothing said about a siege or capture of the city. It is neither asserted nor denied. Nothing is said about Belshazzar having been killed *by the enemy*; it might have been by a conspiracy in the city. There was a large party in Babylonia who plotted the overthrow of Nabonidus, father of Belshazzar. It seems probable however that Belshazzar was killed by the enemy (Appendix C). It is not said that Darius the Mede received the kingdom *that night*; the statement begins a new verse, and, in the Aramaic as we now have it, it begins a new chapter. The word translated 'and' in Dan. v. 31 often in Old Testament narrative implies a very loose connection with what precedes.

What, then, are the alleged inaccuracies here? It is said that Belshazzar was not *king*. We reply that he was *the son of the king*, and there is nothing to show that he had not been associated with his father in the kingdom. It is said that Nebuchadnezzar was not the father of Belshazzar as stated in Dan. v. 2. It is possible that Nabonidus married a daughter or granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar; in that case

Belshazzar would have been descended from Nebuchadnezzar on his mother's side. It may also be that 'father' here means 'predecessor'; the words 'father' and 'son' have a wide meaning in the Bible. It must be remembered that, in answering objections, we are not bound to *prove* our statements, but to suggest what is fairly possible: the burden of proof rests upon the person who asserts that a thing stated is certainly untrue—he must *prove* it to be untrue.

It is also said that Darius the Mede is an unhistorical character. Let us see clearly what is stated of him. We read that he 'received' the kingdom, not that he 'took' it. We 'receive' what is given us by another; see the usage of the word in Dan. ii. 6 and vii. 18, the only other two places where it occurs; Darius 'received the kingdom' in succession to Belshazzar, in the same sense in which the saints 'shall receive the kingdom' from God. So, in ix. 1, it is said that Darius 'was made king' (passive voice). Both these expressions better suit a subordinate than a supreme king. But it is said that Darius 'wrote unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth.' Does not this imply supreme rule? Not necessarily. The word 'earth' cannot be taken literally, for Darius could never suppose that he was king of Egypt, for instance. The Aramaic word here translated 'earth,' in its Hebrew form often means

'land.' And there is such a thing as 'Eastern hyperbole' in the words and titles of kings; Eastern, aye and Western too, for until the time of George III. the regular title of the kings of England included the words 'King of France,' when they had not an inch of French territory belonging to them. Putting all these things together, it seems to be on the whole implied that Darius was in some sense subordinate to Cyrus; he thus may have been Cyaxares or Gobryas, according to the views of some expositors. This would account for his name not having appeared on any of the tablets that have been discovered.<sup>1</sup>

It does not appear, therefore, that there are any proved mistakes in the narrative of Daniel. And even if there were one or two, this would not prove that the history was in the main false. Otherwise we should have to give up our belief in history altogether, for there is hardly a History of England, or of any other country, which is absolutely without a mistake.

There is one question on the other side which the 'critics' have to face. The name of Belshazzar does not occur in Greek histories, his name was altogether forgotten until a few years ago, when it was found on the monuments. If the Book of Daniel were written in the second century B.C., how is it that the writer knew and

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.

mentioned the name Belshazzar? We believe the opponents of the historicity of the Book of Daniel sometimes maintained formerly that the mention of the name of a mythical personage like Belshazzar threw doubt on the truthfulness of the book; and now a 'critic' like Dr. Driver writes of him as 'a historical character, who probably held a prominent position at the time of the capture of the city.'

Difficulties regarding ch. viii.-xii.

The main 'critical' position in regard to Daniel rests chiefly on the character of ch. viii.-xii. It is as follows: Ch. xi. represents the literal history of the wars between Egypt and Syria up to a certain point, and there the agreement with history fails. The book, therefore, must have been written at that point of time, the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. If the book were the purely human product of an author destitute of divine inspiration, the conclusion would probably be correct; we should regard the book simply as one of the Jewish apocalypses; and if we did this we should put it on one side as unworthy of notice, just as we do with the rest of them. But as believers we must look at the divine side of the book also.

The point here raised is unquestionably a difficult one; but a difficulty is not an impossibility. We have nothing elsewhere in the Old Testament exactly similar to what we have in the Book of Daniel. The God-sent dreams of

Daniel are no more wonderful, it is true, than the God-sent dreams of Jacob, Pharaoh, and others. The predictions of the future contained in the dreams are not more wonderful than other predictions made by God through prophets, such as that of the Seventy Years' captivity in Babylon, and the marvellous predictions of our Lord that are scattered through the Old Testament. But the section of the Book of Daniel comprising chaps. viii.-xii., particularly the eleventh chapter, exhibits an amount of *detailed prediction* which is without parallel in the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> This fact has led the 'critical' school confidently to place the composition subsequent to the events recorded. We are, however, not prepared to admit the assumption which underlies this argument—viz., that the Spirit of God either *could not* or *would not* have revealed even such details of the future to His servant. That the degree of inspiration required is unusual (if we may speak of degrees of inspiration) is not an insuperable difficulty. And there are very great difficulties on the other side.

It is maintained that the Book of Daniel was written in order to comfort and strengthen the

Difficulties of the  
'critical'  
position.

<sup>1</sup> The difficulty will be much lessened if we adopt the suggestion made by Dr. C. H. H. Wright, a well-known Biblical scholar, that chap. xi. 1-30, as it has come down to us, may be a mixture of a true prophecy of Daniel with a running *Midrash* or Commentary. See Appendix C.



Jews under the terrible persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. We ask, Did the persecuted Jews believe the book to be true or not? If the writer represented it as a true narrative, when it was really not true, then, in plain English, he told a lie; and it will be hard to believe that our Lord referred to a book as being that of 'Daniel the Prophet'<sup>1</sup> if it had its origin in deceit and falsehood. On the other hand, if the persecuted people knew that the book was imaginary—its stories untrue, and its visions purely 'visionary,' it is hard to see how they could be strengthened by it. In the terrible distresses of persecution the people would be in no mind to be amused; they would get no comfort from a romance which mocked them by saying that Daniel had predicted their sufferings and deliverance, when he had really not done so.

To this it is answered that one of the characteristics of Jewish teaching is that 'the Rabbi embodies his lesson in a story, whether parable, or allegory, or seeming historical narrative,'<sup>2</sup> and that the persecuted Jews would appreciate the fictitious representation of Daniel's history and visions, which the 'critics' believe to constitute the Book of Daniel. We reply that Rabbis may have acted thus in the quiet security of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Driver, in Cambridge Bible, *Daniel*, p. lxxii.

their theological lecture-room, but it is a very different thing when life and death are at stake. We do not deny that there is a time and a place for religious fiction; but the time is not when a heathen king is straining every nerve to stamp out the people and the truth of God; and the place is not in the presence of the tribunal of the heathen magistrate, who offers but two alternatives: 'Recant and live,' or 'Refuse and die.' Fancy going into the cell of a prisoner of the Inquisition, who to-morrow is to be stretched on the rack or burnt at the stake if he does not recant, and trying to strengthen him for the endurance of torture and death for his Lord's sake by reading to him a *religious novel*! Even the disciple of a Jewish Rabbi, we imagine, would not be much comforted by this performance.

We have also to face the fact that this romance—for such it is on the 'critical' view—with little or no basis, had an enormous influence. Professor Bevan uses the words, 'how vast and how profound was the influence of Daniel in post-Maccabean times.' Very soon it was incorporated into the sacred Scriptures, while books with much good moral teaching were left out.<sup>1</sup> Our

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Ryle says that Daniel was compiled, if not actually composed, in or about 165 B.C.; and that the Cethubim, or third part of the Old Testament, in which Daniel is placed, were probably admitted into the Canon,

Lord quotes from it as the book of 'Daniel the Prophet'; the title which He specially assumed for Himself, the 'Son of Man,' has for one of its bases, if not the chief one, a passage in Daniel (vii. 13). Paul's prophecy of the Anti-christ looks back to this book, and the Book of Revelation is saturated with references to it.

It is said that there were many apocalypses written by Jews in or about the second century B.C. Granted, but Dr. Driver himself says, 'Probably, therefore, the Book of Daniel formed the model, especially in chaps. vii.-xii., upon which the non-canonical apocalypses were constructed';<sup>1</sup> and the book would have been much more likely to be thus imitated if it were a genuine prophecy of Daniel himself, than if it had been a book, in the main or wholly imaginary, written by a contemporary of the writers of some of the other apocalypses. Counterfeit coins imitate real ones, not other counterfeits which are of a little better metal than themselves.

We take the other view, that the book is

between 160 and 105 B.C. (*Canon of Old Testament*, pp. 112, 178). On the 'critical' theory a romance was admitted into the Old Testament Canon, not more than sixty years after it was written, when many people were alive who remembered its being written, and who knew it was imaginary; while books of sound moral teaching, like Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Solomon, were excluded.

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Bible, *Daniel*, p. lxxxv.

what it professes to be—a true narrative all through. We have to face the difficulty we have referred to, of the difference between Dan. viii.-xii. and the other parts of the Old Testament; but it will help us to face this if we remember that the one Spirit works in many ways; 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit . . . diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all,' and God spoke unto the prophets 'in divers manners' (1 Cor. xii. 4-11; Heb. i. 1).<sup>1</sup> After meeting this one difficulty we have no other. When the Syrian persecution came, the marvellous fulfilment of these old prophecies would fill the people at once with awe and joy; they would feel that God was there, this would cause awe; they would feel that God was there to deliver them, and this would produce comfort and joy. No wonder such a book should be admitted to the sacred Canon; no wonder that its 'influence was vast and profound in post-Maccabean

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Driver says: 'The opening words of the Epistle to the Hebrews authorise us to expect diversity in the literary forms in which "God spake unto the fathers" in the Old Testament' (*Daniel*, p. lxxi), and he asked why religious fiction might not be one of these forms. We reply, Why might not God have equally shown this 'diversity' by really giving to Daniel prophetic inspiration different in kind from that which He gave to the other prophets? Yet it is this difference which the 'critics' think an insuperable difficulty in the way of believing the historicity of the visions given to Daniel.

school. In point of antiquity, historicity, and divine authority the Book of Daniel still holds its own.

(i.) The arguments from language, etc., in regard to which many 'critics' are very confident, cannot be regarded as of much weight.

(ii.) As to historicity, there are no proved errors in the narrative; and in some points where errors were assumed by 'critics' to exist, the assumptions have broken down in the light of monumental testimony.

(iii.) We have no reason to assume that God would not have given to one of His Old Testament servants a special kind of revelation, which He did not give to any other. As a matter of fact, He did give to the Apostle John in New Testament times revelations of the same kind as those which He is stated to have given to Daniel. This makes it probable that, as the visions were actually given in the latter case, they also were in the former. The two books balance one another, and it is indisputable that the visions of Revelation are largely modelled on those of Daniel.

(iv.) If we assume that the narrative contained in the book is historically true, we can account for its influence in after times, and for its quotation by our Lord.

(v.) In regard to its divine authority, we have the fact of the prophecies contained in it, which

impress us as being beyond the reach of mere human ingenuity to devise; and more than all else, we have the indisputable fact that Jesus Christ accepted it and referred to it as a divinely inspired book, whose predictions must be fulfilled.

## CHAPTER X

### Prophecy

WE propose to consider one or two points in regard to prophecy, wherein many modern critics differ from the 'traditional' view.

**Forth-  
telling  
and fore-  
telling**

Formerly *prediction*, the fore-telling of future events, was generally considered the chief characteristic of prophecy. By *prediction* we mean not a mere wise forecast of the future, based on natural powers, but the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God, enabling a prophet to make known future events such as no human sagacity could anticipate. Among the things we have learnt through recent criticism, whether through the Wellhausen or other schools, is this, that prophecy is rather *forth-telling* than *fore-telling*; that is, it represents the declaration of God's message to man rather than the predicting of future events. But in this, as in other matters, many critics have gone from one extreme to the other, and instead of making divinely inspired prediction the chief thing, they deny it altogether

to the prophets. Thus, Prof. G. A. Smith writes :

This Bible reading in Isaiah's prophecies reveals very clearly the nature of inspiration under the old covenant. To Isaiah inspiration was nothing more or less than the possession of certain strong moral and religious convictions, which he felt he owed to the communication of the Spirit of God, and according to which he interpreted and even dared to foretell the history of his people and the world.

On this we remark :

1. If for the words 'was nothing more or less than' we substitute 'was largely' we have no objection to make to the sentence. God's plan always is to use natural powers for the most part, bringing in the supernatural only where He deems it desirable.

2. But those who maintain that prophetic inspiration is nothing more than this have to prove their assertion, and thus far we have seen no proof of it. It is certain that God does know the future, and can therefore make it known to man if He deems it wise to do so.

3. There are a large number of minute predictions recorded in the prophetic narrative, such as those regarding the rebuilding of Jericho (Josh. vi. 26 ; 1 Kings xvi. 34), the drought predicted by Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 1), the death

Pre-  
dictions in  
the Bible.



of Ahab (1 Kings xx. 42), the death of Ahaziah (2 Kings i. 4), the death of the Samaritan lord (2 Kings vii. 2, 19, 20), the conquests of Jeroboam (2 Kings xiv. 25), the fact that four generations of Jehu should sit on his throne (2 Kings x. 30, xv. 12), the defeat and death of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 6, 7), the seventy years of the captivity (Jer. xxix. 10); and in the New Testament we have a similar one, the wreck of Paul's ship and the safety of all on board (Acts xxvii. 24-26, 44). These were beyond the power of human sagacity to predict. There are also in the prophetic books remarkable predictions as to many nations. Nineveh, Babylon, Ammon, Moab, and others were to be overthrown and their land desolated, but Israel was to be preserved; the Jews were not to retain possession of their own land, but were to be scattered among all nations, and yet not to merge in those nations; they were to be oppressed and spoiled, a byword, a hissing and a curse among the nations. Hosea (iii. 4) says, 'The children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim.' These predictions describe substantially the condition of the Jews for the last 1,800 years. They have neither a 'king' nor their own 'sacrifices'; and yet they abjure idolatry, they have no 'pillar' or 'teraphim.'

They have been dispersed in all nations, hated, cursed, oppressed, yet they remain as distinct as ever from the nations among whom they dwell, ready for the prediction of restoration to God's favour which has not yet been fulfilled. It is hard to see how mere human sagacity could have foreseen all this. Many books on Fulfilled Prophecy have been written, in which it has been shown how remarkably the predictions of the prophets have been again and again fulfilled.

4. All evangelical critics believe that the Old Testament points to Christ; and we have, <sup>Predictions of Christ in O.T.</sup> in regard to Him, something in prophecy and type much more definite than mere human sagacity could have foretold. He was to have a forerunner in the spirit of Elijah,<sup>1</sup> to be born at Bethlehem,<sup>2</sup> to preach in Galilee,<sup>3</sup> to come to Jerusalem riding on an ass,<sup>4</sup> to be betrayed by His own friend,<sup>5</sup> for thirty pieces of silver,<sup>6</sup> to be deserted by His disciples,<sup>7</sup> to be mocked with the words 'He trusteth on God, let Him deliver Him now if He desireth Him,' to have His hands and feet pierced, His

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5; Matt. ix. 10-14.

<sup>2</sup> Mic. v. 2; Matt. ii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Is. ix. 1, 2; Matt. iv. 15, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. xlv. 9; John xiii. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Zech. ix. 12, 13; Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. xxvi. 31.

garments, parted and lots cast upon His vesture,<sup>1</sup> and to rise from the dead.<sup>2</sup> We have clear cases of definite prediction here, in regard to events which mere human sagacity could never foresee. This shows that prediction was one of the elements in prophecy, though not necessarily a predominant element. We do not mean that the prophets always saw *clearly* what was to be in the future; some things might have been revealed to them by God's Spirit, but 1 Pet. i. 10-12 and 2 Pet. i. 20, 21, show clearly that the prophets, under divine inspiration, uttered words the full meaning of which they themselves did not clearly apprehend. Our Lord several times referred to the many predictions regarding Himself, and He expressly predicted His own sufferings (with details), His death and Resurrection; and also the destruction of Jerusalem, the spread of the Gospel in all lands, and His own second coming. It is evident, therefore, that definite prediction of events, which human sagacity could not foresee, and which must therefore have depended upon special inspiration from God, is one of the elements which are met with in the Bible; this must not be excluded from a true definition of prophecy.

There is a tendency at the present time to

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxii. 7, 8, 16, 18; Zech. xii. 10; Matt. xxvii. 35, 43; John xix. 23, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. vi. 10; Acts xiii. 35-37.

regard the prophets as having been very much like preachers of to-day, speaking what they believe to be the truth taught them by God, but having no special inspiration to keep them from uttering as truth what is really error. But no preacher of to-day would venture to prefix his own remarks with the words, 'Thus saith the Lord,' as the prophets so frequently do.

There is another point in which modern criticism to a large extent differs from that which prevailed up to a generation ago. It relates to the question whether a prophet necessarily and invariably spoke from the standpoint of his own times. This question comes up chiefly in connection with the authorship of Isaiah xl.-lxvi. The principle just enunciated seems at first sight so simple that it is now very generally accepted as true; and it is felt that it is altogether more easy to regard Isaiah II. (as the second half of the book is often called) as having been written by some prophet near the close of the exile. It may be well, therefore, to point out first some of the difficulties which attach to this modern view.

1. We do not consider the New Testament as deciding the matter in the sense in which it settles the authorship of Ps. cx. Our Lord never refers by name to Isaiah II., and the New Testament writers never lay stress on the authorship. They simply quote it by its popular name. At the

Can a prophet speak from the standpoint of the future?

'Critical difficulties as to the authorship of Isaiah II.

same time, the unbroken tradition in favour of the Isaianic authorship has weight. When a certain book is said to have been written by a certain man, the probability is that the statement is true; because no object can be gained by attributing it to the wrong man. It is true that Isaiah II. is only indirectly stated to have been Isaianic; that is, it has simply been joined to the first part of the Book of Isaiah. But Isa. xiii., xiv. are positively stated to have been written by Isaiah, and, if these chapters, there is no reason why ch. xl.-lxvi. should not have been written by him.

2. The author of this section of Isaiah is supposed to be a 'Great Unknown.' There can be no question that this portion of Isaiah is one of the most magnificent and most important parts of the Bible, one of the grandest pieces of literature in the world. It is rather remarkable that the author of it should be unknown. The section is about as large as the following six books—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum. We know the names of the authors of these books; all the books put together are inferior in worth to Isaiah II.; and yet the author of this last is an 'Unknown.' We have the names of Haggai and Zechariah, contemporary prophets of the supposed author of Isaiah II., but not the name of this man, who was so far superior to these two. This is strange.

3. When we look into the section in question we find that parts of it do not suit the exilic period. Dr. G. A. Smith says: 'While the bulk of ch. xl.-lxvi. were composed in Babylonia during the exile of the Jews, there are considerable portions which date from before the exile, and betray a Palestinian origin.'<sup>1</sup> In regard to ch. lvi. 9.-lvii., he says, 'This is one of the sections which almost decisively place the literary unity of 'Second Isaiah' past possibility of belief.'<sup>2</sup> He supposes the 'Great Unknown' to have incorporated earlier prophecies in his book. Other critics suppose a second 'Unknown' for the later part of the book; some think it is made up from several writers. But the whole section is so grand that the writer of any portion of it is a man of mark; we therefore see that the 'critical' theory makes it not improbable that, instead of one, there were *many* 'Great Unknowns.' This increases the difficulty.

4. How is it that the section before us came to be tacked on to the first half of Isaiah? Prof. Margoliouth, of Oxford, says: 'By the side of the lengthy roll of Isaiah is the less lengthy roll of the twelve Minor Prophets. Few of these Prophets figure in history, and the judgment of mankind on their literary merits places none of them in the first class. They neither thrill as

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah*, Vol. II., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

Isaiah thrills, nor have they influenced mankind as Isaiah has influenced it. How comes it then, if it was really the fashion of the Israelites to lump the oracles of different Prophets together, that the works of the whole series are not ascribed to the first? Why are not the prophecies of Haggai ascribed to Hosea? Some of the Minor Prophets have produced one chapter or thereabouts, but the tradition has not forgotten their names. How then comes it that the brilliant authors of the Isaianic oracles are for the most part utterly forgotten or neglected? <sup>1</sup>

5. If on 'critical' theories we break up the Book of Isaiah into two parts, we have to break up the first part also into a number of different sections. If Isa. xl.-lxvi. could not have been written by Isaiah, in all probability ch. xiii., xiv. were not written by him, as they also deal with the fall of Babylon. Whence then comes the positive statement in xiii. 1, that it was written by Isaiah? It could not have been based on internal evidence from the two chapters themselves. In regard to this, as well as to the titles of the Psalms, we may say that the more unsuitable the contents may at first sight seem to an asserted authorship, the stronger the *tradition* which asserts the authorship, because it arose and continued in spite of apparent unsuitability. Ch. xxiv.-xxvii., xxxiv.-xxxvi. are regarded as non-

<sup>1</sup> *Expositor*, April, 1900, p. 243.

Isaianic even by the moderate Dr. Driver, and critics like Dr. Cheyne, of course, disintegrate the book much more thoroughly. So the whole Book of Isaiah comes to be a mixture of compositions, shorter or longer, made up of nobody knows how many contributions from a number of 'Unknowns.' And it is put together so clumsily that the pre-exilic first part has some post-exilic portions in it, and the post-exilic second part has some pre-exilic portions in it.

6. And yet this hotch-potch—one can hardly find a better term on the 'critical' hypothesis—has resulted in the 'Book of Isaiah,' one of the most majestic and important pieces of literature in any language in the world! Treating the book as a whole, simply as literature, Dr. R. Moulton writes in his *Modern Reader's Bible*: 'Isaiah goes far beyond this: he is essentially a creative writer, and regularly conveys his thought in indirect forms of dramatic presentation. And I would further suggest that we find in his writings a fusion of all other literary forms in that new form which is here called a Rhapsody. . . . The Isaiah of the first six books [that is, Isa. i.-xxxix.; the first half of the Book of Isaiah] may be described as a man of one idea: and his one idea is the main thought of all prophetic writing. To the corruption and evil around him he holds up a picture of a golden age in a future, to be reached through a purging judgment from



which only a remnant will escape. . . . Quite apart from any question of theology, it may be said that no more precious legacy of thought has come down to us from antiquity than this Hebrew conception of a golden age to come. . . . When we turn from the six books to the *Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed* [i.e., ch. xl.-lxvi.], we find the same general conception, which, indeed, is the thought of all prophecy, but it is now expanded, and placed in a new setting, associated with new historic surroundings. It may be safely asserted that nowhere else in the literature of the world have so many colossally great ideas been brought together within the limits of a single work.<sup>1</sup> If such a magnificent book can be the production of an unknown number of 'Unknowns,' arranged by an unknown redactor, we have to face a greater literary difficulty than if we hold the old belief that the greatest of the prophets wrote the whole book under the direct inspiration of God's Spirit.

7. Prof. Margoliouth, in the *Expositor* for 1900, brings out several points in regard to the usage of Hebrew words in Isaiah which seem to imply that Isaiah II. was written before the time of Jeremiah. The occurrence of Aramaic words in Isaiah II., which used to be urged against its Isaian authorship, proves nothing now that we know, from archæology, that Aramaic is really an ancient language.

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Reader's Bible*, Isaiah, pp. vii, xii, xvi.

There is a large amount of similarity in style between Isaiah I. and II., so much so as to lead some 'critics' to say that the second writer has clearly imitated the first. But as there are also differences in style, we do not lay stress on this point. There is no doubt more grandeur of style in the second part of the book than in the first, as a whole; but such chapters as the eleventh are very grand. It must be remembered, however, that the theme of the second part is such as calls for and excites to magnificent language. Great writers vary in style as the subject varies; and the ordinary reader feels that the magnificence of the second part is not at all inconsistent with the contents of the first part. This is a matter which those who do not know Hebrew can judge as well as those who know it.

The modern view in regard to Isaiah has to face all the difficulties we have mentioned. The 'traditional' view has to face only one difficulty, the modern dictum that prophets are never 'immersed in the future, and holding converse, as it were, with the generations yet unborn,'<sup>1</sup> and that 'a prophetic writer always makes the basis of his prophecies the historical position in which he himself is placed. This principle is not an *a priori* principle, but is one gathered from careful observations, made on

Difficulty  
of the tra-  
ditional  
view con-  
sidered.

<sup>1</sup> Driver, Intro. to O.T., p. 237.

those prophecies the age of which is known.'<sup>1</sup> Let us first see how this principle applies. We know when Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and most of the Minor Prophets lived. We have certain writings which we say belong to them. Why do we say this? Because of the historical statements made here and there, such as, 'The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea, in the days of Uzziah,' etc. We take this to cover the whole book, although there is no repetition of the name of Hosea. So we do in the case of Amos, Micah, etc. We have a similar phrase at the beginning of the Book of Isaiah: 'The vision of Isaiah which he saw . . . in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah'; *i.e.*, for over forty years. Why should not this cover the whole book too? In ch. xiii. we have a repetition such as we do not find in Hosea and other books: we have the positive statement, 'The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see.' Why should not this be just as historical as ch. i. 1, 'The vision of Isaiah . . . which he saw'? If we accept the positive statements of the Bible, we must accept this one; and then the principle just enunciated is proved not to be universally true. If we say the statement is not true, because Isa. xiii., xiv. do not suit the time of Isaiah, then the principle becomes a mere *a priori* dictum,

<sup>1</sup> *Old Testament Prophecy*. Dr. A. B. Davidson, p. 245.

based on a section of passages, which suit the dictum, and not on the whole of them.

Dr. Davidson acknowledges that Isaiah was familiar with the idea of the exile, and of the return, and of the fact that the exile would be to Babylon, and not to Assyria.<sup>1</sup> From a mere earthly point of view, therefore, it would be quite natural for him to muse on the future of his people, as captives in Babylon, and afterwards released from it.

Moreover, prophets often express the future by the past tense, as in the words 'Unto us a child *is* born, unto us a son *is* given.' In such a case the prophet pictures himself as living in the future time, and we have in germ what we should have in full growth if Isaiah wrote ch. xl.-lxvi.

We acknowledge, however, that if Isaiah II. were Isaianic we should have something unique in the extent and detail of the vision of the future; but, as we have said in the previous chapter, there is no reason why God should not sometimes do something unique. Is God a God of routine? 'Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?'<sup>2</sup> Does He not, in the very book we are considering, say, 'Behold, I do a *new* thing.'<sup>3</sup> In relation to ch. xxiv.-xxvii. of Isaiah, in the Cambridge

<sup>1</sup> *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 263. Isa. v. 13, vi. 10-13, xi. 11-16, xxxix. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mic. ii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xliii. 19.

Bible, Dr. Skinner says: 'The treatment of that theme [the day of Jehovah] is in many respects unique in the prophetic literature.' Here we have a 'critic' acknowledging that there is one unique element in the Book of Isaiah; why may there not be another one, and on a larger scale? The same writer, in his note on Is. lxi. 10, says, 'If the prophet is the speaker he transports himself to a future standpoint.' This is all that Isaiah did, if he wrote ch. xl.-lxvi.

The 'traditional' view more probable than the 'critical.'

We submit that all that is required, in order to support the 'traditional' view, is to recognise in Isaiah a combination of *human imagination* and *divine inspiration*. The first we see exhibited continually in poets and novelists. The poet who wrote the *Ancient Mariner*, and the novelist who wrote *Jane Eyre*, represented themselves as living in circumstances in which they did not actually live; and it would be quite possible, from a mere human point of view, for Isaiah to imagine himself a captive in Babylon in the far future, and to speak as if he were such. In recent literature we have a remarkable parallel to this on the earthly side. Some years ago Mr. Bellamy wrote a book called *Looking Backward*. He supposed himself to lie dormant for a hundred years, and then to be suddenly awakened; and his book professes to be addressed to the people of a hundred years hence,

telling them what he then saw, and contrasting it with what he had seen in the nineteenth century. In fact, Mr. Bellamy actually was, what Dr. Driver says no prophet ever was, 'immersed in spirit in the future, and holding converse, as it were, with the generations yet unborn.' Of course, there can be no doubt that the state of things a hundred years hence will not be that which Mr. Bellamy depicted, because no man can foresee the future by his own mere human powers. But God foresees it, and God can therefore foretell it, and He could have so worked upon the mind of Isaiah as to enable him to picture the future as it really would be in Babylon. The believer in God ought to have no difficulty in accepting this as the truth, and if he does, he will have no other difficulties left.

The view of the writer of Isaiah II. is in a sense Babylonian, but only vaguely so. Apart from the mention of the name Cyrus, the aspect of things is somewhat ideal. Delitzsch says of the writer, 'he floats along through the exile like a being of a higher order.' It represents thus, not so much the actual experience of a living man, but rather the utterance of a mind musing about the future and guided in its musings by a divine wisdom. Deliverance from Babylon, and deliverance from all evil through the coming Saviour, seem inextricably mixed together, just as in Matt. xxiv. the destruction

of Jerusalem and the second coming of our Lord are thus combined in one picture. From this point of view it seems more like a rhapsody than like the burning words of a living man to his actual contemporaries.

If any one feels strongly the difficulty about the mention of the name Cyrus (which occurs in two consecutive verses only), he may regard it as possibly a marginal note of some scribe which found its way into the text, just as has frequently occurred in Bible manuscripts. But the mention of the name by Isaiah is paralleled by the mention of the name of Josiah in 1 Kings xiii. 2; and it gives much more force than otherwise to such passages as Isa. xli. 23, 26, xlii. 9, xliii. 9, 10, xlv. 7, 8, xlvi. 8-11, xlviii. 3-5, where the foretelling of events on the part of the speaker in the name of God, and the fulfilment of the predictions, are quoted as a proof of God's superiority to idols; it also gives special force to ch. xlv. 3, 4, where God lays stress upon the fact that He has called Cyrus *by name*. To call a living man by name is nothing special; but to have named him a century before his birth would be something special for the prophet to appeal to in the name of God.

Dr. Skinner says that the *argument from prophecy* is a prominent feature of ch. xl.-xlviii.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Com. Bib.*, Isaiah, p. xii.

In his note on xli. 22 he says, 'Here the challenge is to produce past predictions which have •been already verified by the event.' Dr. A. B. Davidson, in Hastings's *Dictionary*, Art. *Prophecy*, writes in the same strain. 'I have declared the former things *from of old*; yea, they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them: suddenly I did them, and they came to pass' (Isa. xlviii. 3), is a passage which much better suits the idea of the words having been uttered by Isaiah rather than that of a statement as to the speedy success of a contemporary warrior. On the modern theory this argument has but little weight. That a man of the time of Cyrus should predict that Cyrus would gain the victory might be a mere matter of wise human foresight. It would no more prove that God was speaking by His Jewish prophets than the prediction of Mohammed that the Greeks in a few years would conquer the Persians proves that he was a prophet of God.<sup>1</sup>

Many 'critics' as well as all 'traditionalists' believe that the writer of Isaiah II. in his 53rd chapter, throws himself forward into the time of Christ. They think the passage may have a primary reference to Israel, or to some man, but its ultimate reference is to Christ; and the remarkable fitness of the words, as applied to Him, cannot be doubted. It is in several passages in

<sup>1</sup> The Mohammedans lay stress on this argument.



the New Testament applied to our Lord (Matt. viii. 17; John xii. 38; Acts viii. 32, 33; Rom. x. 16), and in one passage it is so applied by Himself (Luke xxii. 37). If, then, the 'Great Unknown' could, by divine inspiration, throw himself forward in spirit 500 years to the time of Christ, why might not the 'Great Known,' Isaiah, have thrown himself forward 150 years to the time of Cyrus? 'If the 64th chapter of Isaiah was necessarily written after the captivity, the 53rd chapter was necessarily written after the crucifixion.'<sup>1</sup>

It is objected that every prophet addressed the people of his *own* time, and therefore Isaiah could not have addressed the people of the exile. But if God inspired the Bible, we have not only to think of what the\* prophets would do, if left to themselves, but of what God might lead them to do, for the benefit of the world at large in *all* time. Besides, ch. xl.-lxvi. would have been very helpful to the people of Isaiah's time; he had predicted the captivity in Babylon (ch. xxxix. 6), and it would have been a great comfort to the people to look beyond it to the great deliverance that was to come;<sup>2</sup> just as Christian workers of the present time are much

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Anderson.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bellamy's book, though in form addressed to people a hundred years ahead, was really an appeal in favour of socialism to the people of his own time.

comforted and strengthened, by the promises of God, as to the future spread of His Kingdom; and just as the future second coming of Christ is brought forward in the New Testament as a means of comfort to those who look for it, all through the ages. It must also be remembered that to address future generations is not an unknown thing in human experience. A thinker who feels that he is in advance of his times consoles himself with the thought that his writings will be appreciated hereafter. Prominent men sometimes direct that their papers shall not be opened for fifty or more years after their death, in order that their history and their opinions may be weighed by unprejudiced people in the future.

There are difficulties in any view which we may adopt, in order to meet all the phenomena which are presented in the Book of Isaiah. But we submit that we shall have the fewest difficulties if we take the Book of Isaiah to be just what it professes to be, the work of one man. In his old age, when the wickedness of Manasseh prevented the exercise of his public ministry, he in his retirement meditated on the future, and God's Spirit taught him truths which he had not known before. He mused on the future exile and restoration of his people, of the bare fact of which he was aware, and the Spirit of God guided his musings, so that he pictured

events as they really would be, and had his mind also led on to the salvation which should be wrought by the coming Messiah, of which the deliverance from Babylon was but a faint image.

This will account for the general ideal character of the book, and also for the parts which most 'critics' acknowledge to have been pre-exilic, such as ch. lvii. This would be a sort of anachronism of the future, betraying the hand of the writer of an earlier age, just as anachronisms in a drama or story descriptive of a bygone time so often show that the writer belongs to a later age. This view would also account for the great stress which the writer lays on prediction as a proof of God's presence. And further, if during the captivity Isaiah II. were in existence, and the miracles recorded in Daniel really took place, this would fully account for the undoubted fact, which otherwise it is hard to account for, that whereas the Israelites had been constantly prone to idolatry, for nearly a thousand years, the seventy years' captivity cured them of this propensity completely and for ever.

What we said about the historicity of the Book of Daniel we may say about the Isaianic authorship of the whole Book of Isaiah. Face the initial difficulty—which ought to be no difficulty to faith—and all then becomes clear; the Book

of Isaiah was the whole of it written by him, whether representing actual experience or prophetic vision. It was very possibly arranged by him, so as to make it the grand unity which it is; and the last half is a magnificent counter-balance to the troubles predicted in the first part of the book. But, if we quail before the initial difficulty, far greater ones rise up in their place.

## CHAPTER XI

### ‘Critical’ methods

WE will now consider some of the ‘Critical’ methods.

Critical’  
reasoning  
mainly  
based on  
hypothe-  
sis.

I. The first thing that strikes us is that while, in some points, the ‘critics’ appeal to the evidence of recent discoveries, yet, in the main, *their argument is based upon hypothesis*. For instance, there is no external evidence whatever for the existence of the persons ‘commonly called J, E, D, P, whose writings are supposed to have formed the basis of the Pentateuch and of Joshua. ‘Critics’ have *supposed* the existence of such persons, in order to account for the phenomena of the Hexateuch. It is very seldom that mere hypothesis can be the basis for anything that is practically *certain*, at the utmost we can say that such and such things are *probable*; and yet so often ‘critics’ treat their conclusions as undoubted *facts*.

Balance of  
probability  
liable  
to change.

It must also be remembered not only that probability implies uncertainty, but also that *the balance of probability is always liable to change*.

by new discoveries ; a thing which to-day is probable may to-morrow become improbable, or even impossible, and *vice versa*. Thirty years ago it was deemed utterly improbable that any one should ever be able to see a bullet inside a man's flesh ; to-day it is known to be not only probable, but an actual fact. Not many years ago it was thought probable by many that the art of writing was unknown in the time of Moses ; this 'probability' of the past is now known to be untrue. Not many years ago critics largely held that the four kings of Gen. xiv. were unhistorical, that there was no such nation as the Hittites, that at the time of the exodus the Israelites must have been a semi-barbarous set of nomads, that Belshazzar was an unhistorical personage ; all these former beliefs of critics are now known to be unfounded. So it has been with a great many other things ; what is probable to-day may be improbable, or even impossible, to-morrow. All this shows how cautious we should be in the matter of making assertions where we have only probability to rest on.

Another thing to note is this ; even though an hypothesis accounts for a fact, *it does not necessarily follow that that hypothesis is true*. Thus, we see a man to-day at Richmond whom yesterday we met in London ; how did he get there ? We make the hypothesis that he went

Reason-  
ings based  
on hypo-  
theses  
generally  
weak.

by train; this is a very natural one, and fully accounts for the fact; yet it is not necessarily true, for he may have gone by road or river, by bicycle, carriage, boat, or on foot. An hypothesis simply gives one reason which *may* account for a phenomenon, but there may be other hypotheses which account for it equally well or better; it gives a *possible* reason, but the true reason may be something else. Yet many 'critics' take it for granted that, if their theory about J, E, D, P will account for the phenomena presented in the Pentateuch, that theory must be true; in other words, they turn 'may be' into 'must be.' The argument, if logically expressed, would be:

If our theory be correct, the Pentateuch would be as it is:

The Pentateuch *is* as it is, therefore our theory *must be* correct.

Put as a logical formula it would be:

If A were B, C would be D;

But C is D, therefore A must be B.

Every logician will see the fallacy of this reasoning, and those who are not logicians can see its fallacy in a concrete form:

If this animal be a horse, it will have four legs;

But this animal has four legs, therefore it *must be* a horse.

If the 'critical' theory accounted fully for the

phenomena of the Pentateuch, all we could say is that it is *probably* true, *as far as that goes*; but there may be reasons on the other side which overturn the balance of probability; and, as we have already said, what is probable to-day may be rendered improbable, or impossible, by some new discovery to-morrow. For instance, suppose, among the wonderful finds we are continually getting in the excavations in Asia and in Egypt, some day a copy of the Pentateuch, as it now is, were discovered in the Library of Nineveh, just as we have the Hindu Vedas in the Library of Oxford. One such discovery would at once overthrow the Pentateuchal theory of the ‘critics,’ because it would show that the Levitical ritual had taken its present shape before the Babylonian exile. Cuneiform tablets have been found recently in Palestine explorations. It is quite likely that in time we may find a Hebrew library somewhere in that country, as we have found the libraries of Assyria and Babylonia. One copy of the Pentateuch found in an early Hebrew stratum would make the ‘critical’ theory collapse, as a house of cards at the breath of a child. Such a discovery would be nothing more improbable than a find like that of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets would have seemed thirty years ago. The utmost that the ‘critics’ are justified in urging is that, if their theory accounts for *all* the facts better



than any other, it is to be accepted as *probably* true in the *present* state of our knowledge. Yet they seem quite confident that their theory is absolutely and certainly true; and they refer to J, E, D, and P, with as full assurance that they were real flesh and blood as if they were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; many 'critics' have more faith in them than in the actual existence of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

We do not deny that there have been a very few cases where hypotheses have become practical certainties. Take, for example, Newton's hypothesis of universal attraction, according to the inverse square of the distance, as a principle to solve astronomical phenomena; this is now an undoubted fact. But notice the contrasts between this theory and that of the 'critics':—

Newton's theory is a very *simple* one, to account for a large number of most strange planetary motions which had *puzzled astronomers for centuries*; and it *accounted for them every one*. The 'critical' theory is a *complex* one (J, E, D, P, P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, etc., and redactor or redactors), to account for difficulties which for 2,000 years Christians, even the most learned, had *hardly if at all felt*, and it introduces many *new* difficulties. Newton's theory has stood the test of over two centuries; the 'critical' theory is but of yesterday in comparison. Newton's theory has accounted for everything all through

these centuries, and does not introduce a single difficulty. When applied deductively it has enabled two mathematicians, independently, to say that certain movements of the heavenly bodies would be accounted for if there were a certain new planet in a certain place; and when they directed their telescopes to that place, there the planet was. The 'critical' theory has had no corroboration of any of these kinds.

It is possible that there may be different documents lying at the basis of the Pentateuch, or of parts of it; in all probability the writer of Genesis used earlier documents as the basis of that book, just as historians now base their histories on ancient authorities. But we protest against the assumption, which seems to underlie all 'critical' writings, that the existence, with definite characteristics, of J, E, D, and P as sources of the Hexateuch is a proved fact, which every one is bound to believe. We very much question whether it is within the powers of any human mind, or minds combined, to take a book like the Pentateuch, and simply from its contents to say: These sentences come from a man who lived at such a time, and those sentences came from another man who lived at another time, and whose motive was so and so. At the utmost we may have a happy guess, and it is quite possible it may be an 'unhappy' one.

The difficulty of the task which the 'critics'

Extreme  
difficulty  
of re-  
solving  
combined  
narrative  
into its  
elements.

claim to have accomplished, so that their conclusions may be truthfully called 'ascertained results,' may be seen in this way. Take the following narrative:—

And the Apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done. And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a *desert* place, and rest awhile. And He took them and went aside into a *desert* place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased; and He received them and spoke unto them of the kingdom of God, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and said unto Him, Send the multitude away *that they may go* into the towns and *country round about*, and lodge and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? Philip answered Him, *Two hundred pennyworth* of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. He said unto them, *Give ye them to eat*. And they said, We have no more but *five loaves* and *two fishes*; except we should *go and buy* meat for all this people. And He said to His disciples, Make them *sit down* by fifties in a *company*. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. And when He had taken the *five loaves* and the *two fishes* He *looked up to heaven* and *blessed*, and *brake* the loaves, and *gave them* to His *disciples* to *set before* them; and the two

fishes divided He among them all. When they were *filled* He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together and filled *twelve baskets* with the *fragments* of the *five* barley loaves, which *remained* over and above unto them that had eaten.

•

Who will undertake to resolve this narrative into its constituent elements? It is culled from Mark, Luke, and John, men whom we know, and whose literary characteristics we know. We have read their gospels often, so that memory may come in to aid us in the inquiry as to the source of the various sentences. To make the matter still easier, the words are italicised which occur in more than one gospel, and which therefore may have belonged to the original source from which the gospel narrative is derived. And we have quoted from the Authorised Version, with which the reader is probably better acquainted than with the Revised. Yet, with all these advantages, how many persons can even approximate to a right solution of the problem how to dissect this narrative, so as to attribute each sentence to its proper author?

But what the 'critics' profess to have done is this. They have taken the Hexateuch (Genesis to Joshua), a book nearly as large as the whole New Testament. They have dissected it so as to attribute this section to one person, and another to another, and often to attribute parts

of a single verse to two different authors. All through the book they are continually making these distinctions. And they have even evolved the authors themselves out of their own consciousness, and have decided approximately when and where they lived, and often what were the motives by which they were actuated—at all events, in the case of P. And if any one ventures to question whether these continual hypothetical assignments to hypothetical authors really are based upon solid fact, he must be prepared to have hurled at him the epithets ‘uncritical,’ ‘unscientific,’ ‘not up to date,’ and so forth. Well, hard words break no bones. Let us be determined to ‘buy the *truth*,’ not ‘hypotheses,’ and it does not matter what people think of us.

Whether the mind of finite man is equal to the task which the ‘critics’ claim to have accomplished, is very doubtful. We quote one or two opinions on this matter. Dr. James, Head-Master of Rugby, speaking on behalf of the Bible Society, said :—

I think there are many who recognise that claims have been put forward by the critics which cannot bear examination. I have always thought that there is obviously a very great difficulty to be met before we can accept the results of what is called modern criticism of the Bible. We have to ask ourselves the question, when we find men who take a book like Genesis and dissect it into five or six different

parts, and put their finger upon that portion and this, and say it has been written by this or that party, whether it is not possible to treat other languages thus, over which a great deal more study has been bestowed than over Hebrew. Take Greek, for instance. We do not know to-day whether Homer did or did not write the two great poems attributed to him. We cannot say whether they were written by one person or by half a dozen. And it is the same with English. If we look at Shakespeare we find certain plays which are supposed to be composite plays, and yet we are asked to believe in the case of such books as Genesis and the books of the Pentateuch, written in a comparatively unknown language, that the critics can say that one section was written by one author, a second by another, and a third by somebody else. To make such a claim as that entirely contradicts what we know of the possibilities of linguistic criticism.

Dr. Sayce says: 'There is a very simple test which can be applied to the pretensions of the "higher critic." More than once I have challenged the advocates of the "critical method" to meet it, but the challenge has never been accepted. In both England and France books have been published of late years which we know to have been the joint work of more than one writer. The novels of Besant and Rice, and of Erckmann and Chatrian, are familiar instances in point. They are written in languages which are both living, which embrace vast literatures, and with which we believe ourselves to be thoroughly acquainted. And yet there is no

Englishman who would undertake to say where Besant ends and Rice begins in the novels which they wrote together, and no Frenchman who would venture to do so in the case of the two French novelists.' 'The subjective impressions of a modern European in regard to ancient Oriental history are not likely to be of value.' 'The "critical" method is scientifically unsound, and its results accordingly will not stand the application of a scientific test. It is quite as much an artificial creation as was the Ptolemaic system of the universe, and like the latter requires for its support an ever-increasing number of fresh hypotheses and complicated qualifications.'<sup>1</sup>

Weakness  
of 'critical'  
reasoning.

II. Another thing that strikes us is that many of the arguments used in the advocacy of modern views on the Bible seem to be pitifully weak. We give some instances.

The Ezekiel volume of the *Expositor's Bible* is written by a 'critic.' He gives a brief *résumé* of his point of view, and we may assume that he selected the strongest arguments which he could find. We give the paragraph, with comments :—

We know for example that the Book of Deuteronomy attained the force of statute law, under the

<sup>1</sup> *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, pp. 13, 18, 21.

most solemn circumstances by a national covenant in the eighteenth year of Josiah.

If we look at 2 Kings xxii. we find that, so far from the book having at that time 'attained' the force of law, the book was recognised by the king and people at once as the *old* book of the law, which their fathers had disobeyed, on account of which God was angry with their children (v. 13). 'For great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book.' People do not 'rend their clothes' and 'weep before God' (v. 19), because they and their fathers have broken a law which thus far has never existed.

The distinctive feature of that book is its impressive enforcement of the principle that there is but one sanctuary at which Jehovah can be legitimately worshipped.

That this was *a* feature of the book is true; but the law of 'one sanctuary' is hardly met with except in two chapters (ch. xii., xvi.) out of the thirty-four contained in the book; it was therefore not *the distinctive* feature. The chief feature of the book is that it is an exhortation to the people to obey God in all things, and to worship Him alone, in accordance with the law that He had given them. The



regulation of 'one sanctuary' is simply one part of that law.

In corroboration of this view we quote Dr. A. B. Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament* (p. 361), in which he closes a summary of the contents of Deuteronomy thus:—

'And, finally, as the corollary of this law of holiness and the unity of Jehovah their God, and as the necessary means of realising this holiness, there is the law of the one altar where sacrifice is to be offered, that at Jerusalem. This is by no means, as is often represented, the chief burden of Deuteronomy. It is the least part of it, and only a consequence of other doctrines. As the book is all spoken by Moses the way in which the law is represented is this. It is not a law that is to come into effect on their entry into Canaan, it is to be observed from the time that Jehovah shall have given them rest from all their enemies round about; that is, from the times of David, or more particularly Solomon; for only when the temple was built did that place become known which Jehovah had chosen to place His name there. The main idea of the book is the holiness of Jehovah and the necessary holiness of His people.'

When we compare the list of reforms carried out by Josiah, as given in 2 Kings xxiii., with the provisions of Deuteronomy, we see that it must have been that book, and it alone, that had been found in the

temple, and that governed the reforming policy of the king.

Why 'it alone'? Luther found a certain book in his monastery which revolutionised his religious life, and through him the life of Europe, because it revealed to him the great doctrine of justification by faith. This doctrine is specially taught in the New Testament, more particularly in the Pauline Epistles. But the book which Luther found did not contain the Pauline Epistles or the New Testament, *and it alone*; it was the *whole Bible*. Just so, even though the Book of Deuteronomy was that which specially attracted the attention of the king and people, there is nothing to show that the book found might not have been the *whole Pentateuch*. The evil practices, the abandonment of which is related in ch. xxiii., are some of them condemned in Leviticus as well as in Deuteronomy; and the reference to Molech in v. 10 appears to point to Leviticus, as the word occurs five times in that book,<sup>1</sup> and not once in Deuteronomy. Furthermore, the destruction of idolatrous symbols was followed by a celebration of the Passover with such solemnity as had hardly ever been observed before (xxiii. 21, 22; 2 Chron. xxxv. 1-19). If the book found in the temple contained Exodus xii. and Numbers xxviii. we

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 2, 3, 4, 5.

can understand the case; but if the king and people had only Deut. xvi. 1-8 to guide them, they had not much in those verses to excite them to so much solemnity. It seems, therefore, probable that the book found in the temple was the whole Pentateuch; in any case, it is clear that there is no ground for the assertion that it contained *only* Deuteronomy. Even if it did contain only Deuteronomy, we have already seen that the book in any case contained an *old* law, which previous generations had broken, and not a new law.

Before that time the law of the one sanctuary, if it was known at all, was certainly more honoured in the breach than the observance. Sacrifices were freely offered at local altars throughout the country, not merely by the ignorant common people and idolatrous kings, but by men who were the inspired religious leaders and teachers of the nation.

We have referred to this matter in the early part of ch. iv., and have shown that the non-observance of a law is no proof of its non-existence; also that there were special reasons in the time of Samuel and Elijah which prevented the 'one sanctuary' regulation being carried out.

Not only so, but this practice is sanctioned by the Book of the Covenant, which permits the erection of an altar in every place where Jehovah causes His name

to be remembered, and only lays down injunctions as to the kind of altar that might be used.

As we have already seen, 'every place where Jehovah causes His name to be remembered,' does not mean the same as 'every place which the worshipper chooses according to his own sweet will'; it therefore does not permit sacrifices to be '*freely* offered at local altars.'

The evidence is thus very strong that the Book of Deuteronomy, at whatever time it may have been written, had not the force of public law until the year 621 B.C., and that down to that time the accepted and authoritative expression of the divine will for Israel was the law embraced in the Book of the Covenant.

We have just seen how exceedingly weak is the evidence which the 'critic' considers 'very strong.'

To find similar evidence of the practical adoption of the priestly code we have to come down to a much later period. It is not till the year 444 B.C., in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, that we read (a) of the people pledging themselves by a solemn covenant to the observance of regulations which are clearly those of the finished system of Pentateuchal Law (Neh. viii.-x.). It is there expressly stated that this law had not been observed in Israel (b) up to that time (Neh. ix. 34), and in particular that the great Feast of Tabernacles had not been celebrated in accordance with the requirements of the law (c) since the days of Joshua (Neh. viii. 17).

In regard to what we have marked (a) we observe: (1) Many things have happened which have not been recorded in the Bible: (2) Many laws actually exist without people solemnly pledging themselves to keep them. How many people have 'pledged themselves by a solemn covenant' to keep the laws of England, or the Sermon on the Mount? (3) People are just as likely to pledge themselves to keep an old law, the breach of which has caused them great calamity, as to keep a new one, of the goodness of which they have had no proof.

(b) Nehemiah ix. 33, 34 runs thus, 'Howbeit Thou art just in all that is come upon us; for Thou hast dealt truly, but we have done wickedly; neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept Thy law, nor hearkened unto Thy commandments and Thy testimonies wherewith Thou didst testify against them.' These words certainly show that the law had not been observed properly; but they equally show that it *had been in existence* a long time; people cannot be guilty of breaking a law if that law is not in existence. 'Where there is no law, neither is there transgression' (Rom. iv. 15). It is therefore clear, from the text which the 'critic' quotes, that the 'finished system of Pentateuchal Law' had been in force long before the time when the people pledged themselves to obey it.

(c) Nehemiah viii. 17 shows that the Feast of Tabernacles had not been celebrated with so much solemnity since the days of Joshua, but it does not imply that it had not been observed at all,<sup>1</sup> and it does imply that it *had* been celebrated in his days; and therefore the strong probability is that a *law* enjoining it had been in existence nearly one thousand years.<sup>2</sup> And yet this law is part of what the 'critics' call the 'Priestly Code,' and assign to post-exilic times.

The paragraph concludes:—

This is quite conclusive as to actual practice in Israel; and the fact that the observance of the law was thus introduced by instalments and on occasions of epoch-making importance in the history of the community raises a strong presumption against the hypothesis that the Pentateuch was an inseparable literary unity which must be known in its entirety where it was known at all.

The whole is a thoroughly typical specimen of what we often meet with in 'critical' reasoning. We have seen how flimsy are the arguments adduced, when a clever 'critic' wishes to put in

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Ryle says, on this passage, 'It is quite clear that the writer does not mean that the Feast of Tabernacles had never been celebrated "since the days of Joshua the son of Nun"; but that the strict observance had not been carried out during all that long period.' He quotes Hos. xii. 9 and Ezra iii. 4 (*Com. Bib.*, p. 248).

<sup>2</sup> Compare Exod. xxiii. 14-17; Lev. xxiii. 34 with 1 Kings viii. 2, ix. 25.

a brief space the strongest case he can for the position he takes; and yet this spider's web of argumentation is 'very strong' and 'quite conclusive.' It would be hard to find elsewhere so many *non sequiturs* in so small a space; unless it be in the note in which Dr. Driver arrays his reasons against the Davidic authorship of Ps. cx., the weakness of which we have already considered in ch. vi.

Other  
instances  
of weak  
reasoning.

A few years ago a newspaper gave an account of an interview with an 'eminent Christian scientist,' who said, 'If in the writings of pre-historic<sup>1</sup> origin which have come down to us, mutilated and mistranslated in parts, we find things that are contradicted by the facts of experience and by reason, then it is clear that such passages are in no sense a divine revelation. The statement that a wise man's heart is at his right hand, while a fool's heart is at his left, will not now, since the invention of the stethoscope, or discovery of the Röntgen ray, find credence from a single rational being, yet it stands in the Bible on the authority of Solomon.'

The first thing to note is that the passage referred to is quoted from Ecclesiastes (x. 2), a book which all 'critics' and many 'traditionalists' believe was not written by Solomon at all. The

<sup>1</sup> This was written a few years ago. Archaeological discoveries since then have made *pre-historic* an unsuitable epithet for Bible writings.

next thing is that the 'scientist' takes literally what is manifestly figurative. To take it literally would imply that the writer of the book really believed that wise men and fools had different kinds of bodies; and, of course, that when he or any other religious teacher urged a foolish man to become wise, if he succeeded, the effect would be that the man's heart would at once jump from one side of his body to the other. The writer must have been sadly tried whenever he had a little palpitation of the heart, perhaps after many years of trying to get wisdom, and found that the palpitation was still on the left side, so that he himself was still a fool. No man but a lunatic would utter such a sentence as literal truth; yet this 'scientist' gravely brought the text forward as an instance of the scientific mistakes of the Bible! Dr. Driver sees indications of two sources in Gen. xxxiv., because in one part 'Shechem himself is the spokesman, and his aim is the *personal* one of securing Dinah as his wife'; in another part 'his father, Hamor, is spokesman, and his aim is to secure an amalgamation between his people and Jacob's.' Do we need the assumption of two different authors to account for a narrative which states that, when the proposed marriage of a young man is being considered, the young man should talk about love and his father should talk about money? Is this a very unlikely thing to happen?



'Critics' see a clear contradiction between Gen. vi. 19 and vii. 2, and regard this as a proof of a double narrative; but it is hard to see how a command to take two of every sort to keep them alive, male and female, can be contradictory to a command to take *seven* couples of some kinds of animals. The Pentateuch as it is was the work of some one, the 'critics' call him the redactor or editor. No editor would put contradictory statements side by side in a narrative. We have already in the chapter on the Pentateuch referred to this matter, and to the exaggerated stress which has been laid upon the distinction between the use of Elohim and Jehovah.

The following are the words of a writer in the *Expository Times* (August, 1901):

It is a prevalent idea in Scripture that sin is grounded by the prior existence of positive precepts, against which it is constituted by transgression. An analogous instance occurs in the priestly narrative of the Flood, which does not recognise the distinction between clean and unclean animals, because the priestly view of Israelite history regarded ceremonial distinctions as having proceeded from the Sinaitic legislation. For the same reason the reference to Noah's altar and sacrifice is omitted.

Here we have first a *hypothetical book*, the priestly narrative. Next we have a *hypothetical statement*, that certain sections of the Genesis narrative of the Flood were not a part of this

book. Lastly, we have a *hypothetical motive* for the exclusion of these sections. There is not a shred of historic evidence for any one of these, and yet this hypothetical statement based on a hypothetical motive of the writer of a hypothetical book is gravely brought forward as an instance to prove a general law.

In Professor G. A. Smith's *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament* (pp. 102 ff.), he gives certain reasons why he thinks the stories of the Patriarchs *may be* accounted for on the supposition that they are myths—there is nothing in the argument to prove that they cannot be true—and he follows his reasonings with the words: 'The numerous facts, of which there are sufficient instances, *prove* that we *have*,' etc.; *i.e.*, prove that the accounts are mythical. Here again we have the argument which we often find implicitly contained in 'critical' writings: 'This thing *may* be, therefore it *must* be.'

We give a few sentences from Hastings's *Dictionary*, in which we see several instances of this habit of *jumping to conclusions*; we came upon them all in an hour's reading of the *Dictionary*.

In the days of the patriarchs *religion must have been in a rudimentary stage*. There are traces of this in the idea, for instance, of the revelations of deity being confined to particular spots, and in the reverence paid to sacred trees or pillars; but at the same time

the patriarchs often express themselves in terms suggesting much riper spiritual capacities and experiences. Here *we cannot but trace* the hands of the narrators, who were penetrated by definite moral and religious ideas, and who, *writing with a didactic aim, idealized* to a certain extent the characters of the patriarchs.

The gist of the whole sentence, and specially of the words we have italicised, is this: 'The patriarchs lived in a time when they could not have had the religious experience attributed to them, and therefore the narrative is idealized.' What proof is there of this? The highest idea of true religion, according to our Lord, is love to God and man;<sup>1</sup> this is not a product of evolution, but the gift of God's grace; why may not God have given it to Abraham and other select souls under the old dispensation? The deepest things of the Kingdom of God are 'revealed to babes,'<sup>2</sup> to child-like souls of any age in life, and of any age of the world's history. How does the writer of this article know that the narratives of the patriarchs were written with 'a didactic aim' and therefore 'idealised'? Might they not be a simple statement of facts, which embodied important religious truth? Persons who write with a didactic aim are generally fond of moralising, pointing out the lessons to be learned from the narrative. But

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiii. 36-40.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 25.

one of the most marked characteristics of the Bible is that there is so very little of this; we have a plain unvarnished narrative of facts from which the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. The same article<sup>1</sup> contains the following sentence:—

Jacob, keeping Laban's sheep, may be an individual; but when he and Laban are fixing the boundary which neither is to pass, they plainly represent two peoples.

Why 'plainly represent'? These two words imply that the narrative cannot be *literally* true; that is, that it is *impossible* that the two men, Jacob and Laban, could ever have said to one another, 'We agree that neither of us shall cross this boundary to injure the other.' What is there impossible or improbable in such a statement?

These extracts are not from an extreme 'critic,' but from a writer who has the reputation of being one of the most moderate and cautious of them, Dr. Driver.

Here are other extracts, from another writer:—

The 11th chapter of Genesis carries us from the Flood to the birth of Abraham. The Massoretic text and the Samaritan Pentateuch have here a list of nine names; the Septuagint (followed by Luke iii. 36), *obviously for the sake of reaching the number ten*, as in Gen. v., inserts Cainan between Arpachshad and Shelah.

What proof is there that the words we have italicised are 'obviously' true? What does the writer know as to the reason of the insertion of a name by those who translated the Pentateuch into Greek 2,000 years ago?

The editors to whom we owe the Book of Genesis in its present form evidently understood the Lamech of ch. iv. to be the same person as the Lamech of ch. v.

What is the ground for stating that the editors of Genesis '*evidently understood*' what the readers of Genesis for 2,000 years have, as a rule, not understood?

In reference to antediluvian times the writer says positively, 'The art of writing was not then known.' This is a matter about which neither the writer nor any one else knows *anything whatsoever*. Fifty years ago it was stated just as positively that the art of writing was not known in the time of Abraham.

Hasty conclusions.

Here is another instance of this jumping to conclusions in the case of a well-known 'critical' scholar:—

When, for example, in the account of Solomon's relations with Hiram (1 Kings ix. 12), the older historian says that Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee, and the chronicler (2 Chron. viii. 2) speaks of 'the cities which Hiram had given to Solomon,' *we are to conclude* that the latter author, dazzled with the glory of the great king, could not credit the

story that Solomon had handed over cities in his own land to a stranger, and assumed that the transaction had been precisely the other way.

Note the words we have italicised; the writer does not say '*possibly* this was the reason,' but '*we conclude* that it was.' Here, again, 'may be' is turned into 'must be.' It is very possible that some other cause may have led to the difference in the two accounts.

If there were space, extracts like these might be easily multiplied. These quotations suggest another thing which has struck us: 'critics' know a very great deal about the *motives* of men who lived over 2,000 years ago; they say positively that one statement was made or altered from this motive, and another from that motive, and so forth. All these are mere assumptions; they may be probable, but can be nothing more. It is always a hazardous thing for one man to decide the inner reasons which lead to the actions or writings of other men, especially in the case of unknown men who lived thousands of years ago, in a different environment from our own.

Those who read 'critical' books need to be always on their guard against the tendency of the writers to jump to conclusions, and should carefully note whether, in their zeal for their theories, they do not, sincerely of course, but

still illogically, turn 'probably' into 'certainly,' 'may be' into 'must be'; such words as 'evidently,' 'obviously,' 'certainly,' and so forth, are often applied to unproven statements which simply represent the writer's opinion.

**One-sided  
reasoning.**

We have already alluded to the way in which 'critics' assume that what in the Bible seems to be in their favour is genuine and true, and what seems against them is for some reason or other untrue. They take what they like and reject what they like in the historical books. What goes against their opinions is regarded by them for some reason as untrustworthy; it is an idealisation, or a corruption of the text, or a gloss; in any case, they regard it as unhistorical. But surely, if we want to know the truth or falsehood of a narrative, we ought to depend upon evidence, not upon prepossessions. In regard to the bulk of Old Testament narrative, we have absolutely nothing of evidence to rely on but the books themselves, and the monumental evidence which has grown so marvellously in this generation. For the most part the monumental evidence has no bearing whatever on the Bible narrative; where it does touch it the evidence is in favour of the probability of the general truthfulness of the Bible narrative, rather than otherwise, except in regard to pre-Abrahamic chronology; and even in this latter matter there has not yet been

definite proof that the Bible chronology is wrong.<sup>1</sup> It is acknowledged on all sides that the Old Testament writers were godly men, who wrote from a good motive, and would therefore not intentionally write what was false. There is nothing impossible in the narrative to those who believe in the reality of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Moreover, archæology shows that there is nothing improbable in the idea that the narrative is based on contemporary cuneiform tablets. Why then should we not regard the narrative all along as true?

Many of the ‘critics,’ perhaps most of them, ‘Critical’ instead of taking the narrative as true, lay down *præjudicia*.<sup>præjudicia.</sup> The patriarchal time was a period when men could not have ‘ripe, spiritual capacities and experiences’; David was not a spiritual man, and therefore wrote few, if any, of the Psalms; Samuel could not have uttered the words quoted in 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3, 22, 23; a prophet is never ‘immersed in the future,’ and therefore Isaiah could not have been the author of Isa. xl.-lxvi.; and so forth. These are simply ‘critical’ *opinions*, without any historic basis whatsoever; and on the strength of these *præjudicia* the books are dissected by the ‘critics,’ and this part is said to be true, but that part to have been idealized by a later writer. And this is called ‘scientific criticism.’

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.



'Science' means *knowledge based on facts*, not mere surmises and opinions;<sup>1</sup> and 'criticism' means acting *like a judge*. A judge who settles matters according to his own opinion, apart from evidence, would not remain long on the bench.

We give two examples to illustrate the matter now before us. In 1 Sam. vii. 9 it is stated that Samuel sacrificed at Mizpeh. This suits the 'critical' theory, and is regarded as true. But that Samuel said what he is reported to have said in xv. 2, 6, 22, 23 is, in the first two verses, the mere assigning of a 'theoretical motive' by the writer of the book (Driver, *Intro.* p. 178), and in the second case is 'a summary of later Jewish theology' (*International Critical Commentary on Samuel*, p. 137). There is not a shred of external evidence to prove that Samuel did not say the words attributed to him. But the statement that Samuel did say them is opposed to the 'critical' theory, therefore it is regarded as untrue. A still more striking example of the way in which the 'critics' select what favours them in the Bible, and reject what does not, is seen in regard to the occurrence of the word *Cyrus* in two consecutive verses, Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1. This is regarded as a conclusive proof that the second half of the Book of Isaiah was not written by that prophet. We

<sup>1</sup> See Prof. Sayce's remarks, in ch. vii., as to the unscientific character of modern 'critical' methods.

point to the parallel in 1 Kings xiii. 2, where the 'old prophet' mentions the name of Josiah three hundred years before that king was born. The 'critic' replies that this name evidently was put in the text by somebody who lived in Josiah's time or later. Suppose it was so; we then ask why could not the name 'Cyrus' also have been put into a real prophecy of Isaiah's by some scribe who lived at the close of the exile or afterwards? It is well known that marginal glosses have sometimes found their way into the text of Bible manuscripts. But the 'critic' who does not believe that the old prophet mentioned the name of Josiah will still insist upon it that the writer of Isa. xl.-lxvi. did mention the name of Cyrus.<sup>1</sup> Is this a fair kind of *criticism*? Would a 'judge' make distinctions of this sort, allowing a procedure on one side of a case which he forbids on the other?

The large amount of *assumption* which lies at the base of so much of the reasoning of the modern school suggests the following as a 'critical' recipe for the establishment of a theory:

Assump-  
tions.

1. Assume a theory.

<sup>1</sup> We do not maintain that the word 'Cyrus' is an interpolation; we believe Isaiah was inspired to mention it. But we urge that, in all fairness, the 'critic' who claims that the mention of 'Josiah' in 1 Kings xiii. 2 is due to a later writer, ought to make the same allowance in regard to the name 'Cyrus.'

2. Assume that what in ancient literature is in favour of the theory is genuine and true, and that what is opposed to the theory is historically untrustworthy.

3. Prove the theory.

In a certain Euclid examination one of the problems given was, 'To bisect a given straight line, *i.e.*, to divide it into two equal parts.' One boy commenced thus:—'Let AB be the given straight line, and let C be the middle point of it; it is required to bisect it.' After a due amount of reasoning the boy came to the conclusion that the line was really bisected in the point C. In reading 'critical' arguments the present writer has often been reminded of this boy. If we may be allowed to use a very homely phrase, in regard to the aspect of 'critical' methods which we are now considering, we should be inclined to call it the 'heads I win, tails you lose' system of Bible criticism.

'Critics' largely ignore what is written on the other side.

III. One very characteristic trait of the 'critics' is that they so largely ignore what is written on the other side. It is so on the Continent, as Wilhelm Möller observes in the Introduction to his book, *Are the Critics Right?*<sup>1</sup> He formerly was a 'critic' himself, and has written this book in order to show how uncritical their contentions really are. It is the same also in England. Some years ago a number of scholarly

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Religious Tract Society.

authors wrote a book called *Lex Mosaiqa* on the 'traditional' side: so far as we know, beyond a review article or two, no reply was ever made to it. Another book was written by Dr. Baxter called *Sanctuary and Sacrifice*, prefaced by favourable opinions from Mr. Gladstone, Bishop Ellicott, Prof. Sayce, Dr. Story (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland) Dr. A. K. H. Boyd, and others, who employ strong terms as to the way in which, to use Dr. Boyd's words, the author has 'made mincemeat of Wellhausen.' Mr. Gladstone wrote, 'Unless your searching inquiry can be answered and your statements confuted, his [Wellhausen's] character, both literary and theological, is destroyed.' Again and again the 'critics' were challenged to refute the book; to refute a book so championed might have been as effective on the 'critical' side as was the slaughter of the champion Goliath; but the book has never been answered, so far as we know, except in one or two review articles.

Similar remarks may be made of Dr. Leathes' *Law in the Prophets*; Mr. Spencer's book, *Did Moses write the Pentateuch?* Dr. John Smith's *Integrity of Scripture*; and also of Rev. J. Urquhart's volumes, which contain strong points, as one 'critical' reviewer acknowledged—and, having acknowledged the fact, said not a word about these strong points in his review—but the

books are for the most part simply ignored by the 'critics.' This is the case with almost, if not quite, all the books written on the 'traditional' side; they are not answered. This reticence on the part of 'critics' probably arises from one of two reasons, either they cannot meet the arguments on the other side, or they despise them. If they cannot meet them, the arguments must be strong; if they despise them, it would look something like endorsing the opinion of Dr. Story, in the preface above-referred to, 'Dogmatic self-satisfaction is the badge of all their tribe.' The self-confidence of the 'critics' raises a presumption against the stability of their views. We remember the words, 'Pride goeth before destruction,' and 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'<sup>1</sup> True science never boasts. It is well aware how vast is the ocean of the unknown which surrounds the little island of the known. It always speaks cautiously of what cannot be proved by actual demonstration; it is always ready to say, 'We do not know'; it looks out for anything from any quarter which may perhaps point in the direction of the truth. But he who rests on the word of Christ may be confident, for Christ is 'the Truth.'

IV. This brings us to the last and saddest characteristic of 'critical' methods, and that is the

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. x. 12.

way in which Christ and His Apostles are too often put on one side. One would have thought that Christian men, in considering the light in which they should look upon the Old Testament, would have begun by asking how their Lord and His chosen Apostles looked upon it. But by too many of the 'critics' the Apostles are brushed aside at once; it is held that they simply follow the mistaken ideas of the Jews of their time, and there is an end of the matter. Even our Lord is by many of them brushed aside likewise; He too had these mistaken ideas, and the 'critics' are too enlightened to follow Him! Others hold that our Lord knew what they believe to be the truth as to the Old Testament, but did not think it worth while to correct the Jews on the matter.

The  
'critical'  
position  
puts aside  
Christ  
and His  
Apostles.

One would think that they would not dismiss the matter in this way in a sentence or a paragraph, but would carefully consider all their Master's references to the Old Testament, and see whether these references accord with their opinion. But they do nothing of the sort. It is not that the matter has not been brought before them.\* Many books have been written on 'traditional' lines, in which great prominence has been given to the New Testament teaching on the matter, but these books are very largely ignored by the 'critics.' No answers are, as a rule, given to these arguments, and no notice is taken of

them. The 'critics' still go on their own lines, with their hypotheses and reasonings; and whenever they do refer to our 'Lord's words, they select only those sayings which they think they can make to have a 'critical' meaning, and pass by the rest. They quote 'It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you'; but they seldom quote such passages as 'The Scripture cannot be broken' and its context, or the numerous appeals to the Old Testament as authoritative, nor do they explain what is really meant by such words as 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.'<sup>1</sup> If they do quote them, they acknowledge that, 'Christ and His Apostles and the writers of the New Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament,' yet they themselves, if we understand them aright, do not accept these 'notions.'

The effect of this putting of Christ aside must inevitably in the long run tend to lower His authority; and the result is that we have a long gradation of 'critical' views, merging into one another, so that we have the moderate evangelical position at the one end, and a so-called Christianity which denies the essential verities of the faith at the other end—no, this is not the 'end'; the 'end' is absolute blank unbelief.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 18; John x. 35.

Error on the Pentateuch puts a man on the slope, and no one can tell how far he may slip down. Fifty years ago Dean Alford wrote these words,<sup>1</sup> which have proved to be almost prophetic:—

It is important to observe in *these days*<sup>2</sup> how the Lord here *includes the Old Testament, and all its unfolding of the divine purposes regarding Himself, and His teaching* of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. I say this, because it is always in *contempt and setting aside of the Old Testament* that rationalism has begun. First *its historical truth*—then its *theocratic dispensation*, and the *types* and *prophecies* connected with it, are swept away; so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr: and thus the way is paved for a similar rejection of the New Testament; beginning with the narratives of the birth and infancy, as theocratic myths—advancing to the denial of His miracles—then attacking the truthfulness of His own sayings which are grounded on the Old Testament as a revelation from God—and so finally leaving us nothing in the Scriptures but, as a German writer of this school has expressed it,\* ‘a mythology not so attractive as that of Greece.’ That this is the course which *unbelief has run* in Germany should be a pregnant warning to the decriers of the Old Testament among ourselves. It should be a maxim for every expositor and every student, that Scripture is a *whole*, and stands or falls together.

The way in which the criticism represented

<sup>1</sup> *Greek Testament*, note on Matt. v. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The italics in this extract are Dean Alford’s.



by Hastings's *Dictionary* has developed into that represented by the *Encyclopædia Biblica* is a sad commentary on these words.

An ardent disciple of Robertson Smith has written a book called: *Is Christ Infallible, and the Bible True?* In it he shows how far criticism has gone beyond the bounds within which his master would have confined it, and how serious are the consequences which have resulted. But when a man sets a ball a-rolling, it will often go a great deal farther than he thinks and intends. A book has been recently issued with a suggestive title, *The Pentateuch in the Light of To-day*. This might be taken as the motto of the 'critical' system; the Old Testament is considered by it, not 'in the light of Christ and His Apostles'—for it is acknowledged that they followed 'current Jewish notions'—but in the 'light of to-day,' that is, of the thought of the men who live to-day. 'To-day' always looks back with pity on the darkness of 'yesterday'; and 'to-morrow,' when it comes, will look back with equal pity on the darkness of what is now 'to-day.' 'Yesterday' the Christian Church said, almost with one voice, that Moses composed the Pentateuch. Many loud voices 'to-day' proclaim that he certainly did not compose it. What 'to-morrow' will say nobody knows. Is it not worth while asking which view is most in accordance with the

New Testament, which Dr. Horton, as Chairman of the Congregational Union, has recently pronounced 'an ultimate authority'? Religious thought which is looked at in the 'light of to-day' will not have much stability about it, but will change as the day changes. But if we look at all things, the Old Testament included, in the light of Him who is 'the light of the world,' our views will have the stability of truth; for while the light of to-day is so different from that of yesterday and of to-morrow, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.'<sup>1</sup> Let 'to-day' find out all the truth it can, and let us be devoutly thankful for all the real fresh light which has shone on the Bible, and from the Bible, during the last fifty years—for we have learnt in this period a great deal that is both new and true—but let our primary question be, What did Christ and His Apostles believe, and what did they say? We rejoice to know, with the old leader of the Pilgrim Fathers, that 'the Lord hath more light and truth to break forth from His word,' but it is from 'His word,' not from the thought of 'to-day,' that it is to break forth; and 'His word' reaches its perfection in the teaching of Christ.

It is an acknowledged fact that 'both Christ and the Apostles or writers of the New Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.

the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament.' When we set this beside some statements of the 'critics,' we are struck with the contrast. Thus we read, as the words of one of them, 'The theory of the equal and lasting divinity of the Jewish scriptures has been fertile in casuistry, bigotry, and cruel oppression of every kind.'<sup>1</sup> The Jews believed in this theory, our Lord held the 'current Jewish notions' in regard to the authority of the Old Testament, therefore He held a theory which 'has been fertile in casuistry,' and so forth.

Of course the evangelical writer of the sentence would not accept the statement just made, but that is the logical result. This same writer says in regard to the Levitical sacrifices, 'It is the direst blunder which a preacher may commit to dwell upon them.'<sup>2</sup> If this be so, the writer of ch. ix. and x. of the Epistle to the Hebrews must have been a great blunderer! So also the Apostle Paul, who speaks of 'Christ our passover,' and Peter, who speaks of 'being redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.'<sup>3</sup> We have been told that we must accept or reject the different utterances of the Old Testament according to our ideas of their 'reasonableness.'

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Modern Criticism*. Sir. R. Anderson.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Integrity of Scripture*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Pet. i. 19.

Our Lord thought it 'reasonable' to accept the Jewish belief as to the authoritativeness of the Old Testament, and He always appealed to 'what was *written*' in it as settling every question. Who is the best judge of reasonableness, sinful man or the sinless Son of God, filled without measure with the Spirit of God? It is very sad to see our Lord thus pushed on one side. And there is a ludicrous side to it also, as there always is where puny man puts his own opinion above the words of his Lord and Maker. One fancies a bird resting on a telegraph wire, and saying to itself, 'Men say this is put up in order to send thoughts to a distance; but that is absurd; how can a wire do anything to help thought? I believe it has been put up in order that birds may perch upon it when tired: this is *my* idea of reasonableness.'

'Surely if any one has a right to speak of the Old Testament Scriptures, it is He [Christ]. He was an ardent student of them. He saw everything pointing forward from the beginning to His own work and sacrifice. Abraham beheld His day. The Scriptures testified of Him. He had weighed every such word as a counsel of God, so that, to the men on the way to Emmaus, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He could point out and interpret the things concerning Himself. Surely all that,

added to His Jewish birth and His living on the soil of Palestine while the Jews were a nation, gave Him some advantages for understanding how the Scriptures came to be. He was no traditionalist. He lost His life setting at nought Jewish superstition. With great boldness He discovered the limitations of Old Testament revelation.

'And yet criticism has the hardihood—and thereby discovers plainly the direction in which it goes—to rule out the testimony of Christ as of no weight on this subject. There is no vagrant critic, albeit his words show conclusively a flagrant non-receptivity for the spirit of our religion, whose theories, if they have any show of learning with them, are not patiently discussed; but He who saw with unerring eye into the future as into the past, and laid down the lines of a kingdom which is absorbing all other kingdoms, is set aside!'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. Smith, *Integrity of Scripture*, p. 101.

## CHAPTER XII

### Conclusion

IT may be asked, if the 'critical' views are not true, how is it that they have spread so rapidly? Twenty years ago they had been hardly heard of, now they seem to be carrying everything before them. We do not deny that the rapid spread of these views is, to a certain extent, an argument in favour of them. But there is something to be said on the other side. So far as we can see this is the *only* argument in favour of them, and we cannot accept theories which we deem to be unproved, especially when they seem to involve several very serious new difficulties, simply because a large number of people adopt them. We must base our decision on arguments, not on the vote of the majority. Again, the very rapidity with which such revolutionary opinions have 'spread like wildfire' makes us ask whether possibly it is not an indication of *wild fire* rather than *steady fire*. The advance of truth is like that of the tide, steadily and

Is the 'critical' system likely to last?

slowly progressing; when opinions come in with a rush, they are apt to go off with a rush. If a rock is *suddenly* engulfed by water, it is more likely to be due to a passing wave than to a steady tide. Truth is like the 'dawning light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day';<sup>1</sup> what comes ~~up~~ with a sudden blaze of brilliancy is not unlikely to be the rocket which comes down like a stick. An oak-tree does not grow in a night; Jonah's gourd did,<sup>2</sup> and we know what became of it.

The history of mankind abounds with the record of waves of opinion or of feeling, which seemed to carry everything before them, and soon passed away. A generation ago Baur's views on the untrustworthiness of the New Testament seemed to be making marvellous progress on the Continent, but that wave has already practically spent itself. Professor Harnack, of Berlin, no very orthodox man, speaks of Baur's views as a 'mere episode.' Darwin's theory about the same time seemed to be spreading with equal rapidity, but grave doubts are entertained on the matter now. Some fifteen centuries ago Athanasius contended for what he believed to be the truth, but almost all the bishops and the scholars of the Church were against him, as they held Arian views; so much so that 'Athanasius against the world' has passed into

<sup>1</sup> Prov. iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Jonah iv. 6-8.

a proverb. For fourteen centuries the Christian Church in all its sections has practically agreed that Athanasius was right, and the 'world' of scholars and ecclesiastics wrong.

After many years the dispute regarding the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel has to a large extent settled down into a belief of the old view. An eminent 'critic' like Dr. Briggs has recently written:<sup>1</sup> 'The modern idea that the order of Mark is the norm for the Life of Jesus has been so shattered by recent criticism that it can no longer be regarded as a decisive test in any question.' If one 'modern' idea has already been shattered, it is not unlikely that some other modern ideas, which are now popular, may before long be also shattered. The old doubts in regard to Homer, and to the very early history of Egypt and Greece, have been to a large extent dissipated. Dr. Sayce speaks of 'the fact that "critical" difficulties and objections commonly turn out to be the result of the imperfection of our own knowledge. Archaeological research is constantly demonstrating how dangerous it is to question or deny the veracity of tradition or of an ancient record until we know all the facts. . . . The archaeological discoveries of the last half-dozen years in Egypt and Krete have once for all discredited the claim of "criticism" to apply its theories of

<sup>1</sup> *Expository Times*, September, 1903.



development to the settlement of chronological or historical questions.<sup>1</sup> In his *Integrity of Scripture* Dr. John Smith has shown how the 'critical' system is simply one aspect of the materialism that kept God out of sight as much as possible and sought to explain everything by natural causes, which was so prevalent a generation ago, and is now passing away.

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It must be further remembered that these new views are by no means universally held. Among those who hold to the old belief may be mentioned such scholars as Bishop Ellicott, Bishop Moule, Dr. Wace, Professor Margoliouth, Canon Girdlestone, Chancellor Lias, Dr. Sinker, and others in England, besides many in America. We have already seen that a number of prominent archaeologists have pronounced against the 'higher criticism.' And while the 'critical' theory, like all new and revolutionary movements, makes a great noise, there are, we doubt not, a large number of scholarly men, in British pastorates and elsewhere, who go on the quiet tenor of their way, holding and preaching the old way of putting things, of whom the world hears nothing.

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We must also remember that the Church at large, the listeners in the pew as well as the preachers in the pulpit, have by no means

<sup>1</sup> *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, pp. 60, 119.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. vii.

accepted the new criticism. By many it is rejected, and its origin referred to a very undesirable source. A large number of Christians know simply that Christ and His Apostles held the old views regarding the truth and authority of the Old Testament, and what was good enough for Christ is good enough for them. The people who have definitely accepted 'critical' views form but a very small fraction of the members of the Christian Church. They have a large number of scholars among them, it is true, but the contest is not one which will be settled by scholars alone. To begin with, scholars are experts, and it is a fixed principle of law that expert evidence always needs to be carefully weighed, because experts are so apt to have their judgment biased by their love for pet theories. 'In his *History of the Criminal Law*, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen places on record the matured judgment of the judicial bench, that no kind of evidence needs more the test of cross-examination than that of experts.'<sup>1</sup> In a trial at law, say for poisoning, while medical experts give their evidence, the decision is made by plain men in the jury box, instructed by a judge who is accustomed to weigh evidence, and who is absolutely impartial. It is a calamity that, in this 'critical' contest,

<sup>1</sup> *The Bible and Modern Criticism*. Sir R. Anderson, p. 48.

the scholars are both advocates and judges at the same time; it is difficult to get at the truth when this is the case.

This is one reason why the final decision rests not with theologians, but with the rank and file of the Church. Some points at issue require the evidence of Hebraists, but the main questions can be settled by the plain Christian man who has his English Bible in his hand, as well as by the most learned scholar; in some respects the plain Christian man has the advantage, because he has no theory to support, on the one side or on the other, and therefore is less likely to have his judgment warped. He is quite as competent as the best Hebrew scholar to discuss such questions as these: whether the Flood narrative contains contradictory statements; whether the patriarchs and others were likely to have had the religious knowledge ascribed to them in the Bible; whether the Mosaic ritual is inconsistent with the rest of the Old Testament, especially Judges to Kings and the Prophets; and this may be said of most of the other points in dispute. This fact is acknowledged by Prof. Robertson Smith, who wrote, in regard to an English book representing Wellhausen's views: 'The present volume gives to the English reader an opportunity to form his own judgment on questions which are within the scope of any one who reads the English Bible carefully, and

is able to think clearly and without prejudice about its contents.\* We are not frightened, therefore, by the number of those who have gone over to the 'critical' side. If it be said that Moses could not have composed the Pentateuch, because a preponderance of present-day scholars say so; we reply that we might just as well argue that Moses did compose the Pentateuch, because, not a majority, but practically *the whole* of evangelical critics up to a generation ago maintained that he actually did so. Men like Dr. Pusey, Dean Alford, and others were as good critics and scholars as are those who are now alive; they had the same materials for forming an opinion which present-day scholars have; and the marvellous discoveries of archæology since their day, while on the one hand they raise difficulties in regard to the chronology of Gen. v. and xi., are yet in favour of the general accuracy of the Old Testament narrative.

What we have endeavoured to show is this. **Summary.** To begin with, the new views we have been considering are by no means established; they rest upon hypotheses which have not been proved, and the results can be nothing more than *probable*; we have endeavoured to show that they are not even that.

In the next place, the arguments in favour of these views appear to have, but have little, force:

the difficulties that they have been designed to meet are not formidable; on the other hand, there are serious new difficulties created by them, especially in the way of reconciling the reconstructed Old Testament with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament. These modern views would give us a very complicated Bible, a mixture of truth and error, of legend, myth, idealism, and fact; this Bible contains a book like the Pentateuch, which professes to be historical, but is really a mixture of ancient legend, true historic narrative, and a later written 'ideal' tale of what partly did happen, and partly might fittingly have happened, but really did not; and the whole of this narrative is so artfully woven together, that for over two thousand years, not only the common people, but even the holiest and wisest minds among Jews and Christians alike, including the Apostles certainly—and, almost certainly, including our Lord Himself—failed to detect the mixture, and regarded the whole as literally true. These books contain contradictory elements, the 'spirit of P' being inconsistent with the prophetic spirit; and yet the New Testament sees nothing contradictory in the Old Testament, but regards the whole as a book which 'must be fulfilled,' and regards specially the Law, contained in that marvellous mixture of truth and error, the Pentateuch, as something of which 'one jot or

one tittle shall in no wise pass away, till all things be accomplished.'

These modern views also require us to believe that the Jews and the Samaritans, bitterly hostile rivals, joined together in venerating, as the real, ancient, authoritative Law of Moses, a book which was put together a thousand years after Moses, by one of the rivals (the Jews), at a time when there was bitter hostility between the two parties. Also, we must believe that this false belief was handed down by the traditions of both rivals, without the slightest hint of an opposing tradition representing what really happened, although, even among the Jews, there were antagonistic parties, and the new religious ritual was a burdensome one. The theory is weighted also with the other difficulties which are enumerated at the close of the fifth chapter.

Such is the complicated system, bristling with difficulties, which the reconstructionists would offer us.

We have endeavoured to show that it is a *baseless theory to meet small difficulties, and a theory which introduces serious real difficulties.*

On the other side we have simply to take the Bible as it is, as a plain straightforward history, substantially true from beginning to end; and the old belief that it is perfectly true has not been disproved. This belief has difficulties, but they are not serious; and there always

must be difficulties when we have to deal with a narrative of events that took place so long ago, so far off, and in surroundings of which we are so largely ignorant. The old belief enables us to see God in the Bible all through, far more than the new view permits. It tells us how God, when He formed the nation of Israel as His own peculiar people, gave them a divine law. This law was imperfectly obeyed for centuries, but it was an inspiration to elect souls, and kept the mass purer, in spite of all their imperfections, than the nations around them. This law led on to the perfect law which Christ brought in. We have endeavoured to show that we thus have a united Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets dwelling in harmony together in it, and both in harmony with the other books: and then, when Christ comes, He joins the Law and the Prophets with His own Gospel teaching, which fulfils them both; and the two harmonious Testaments blend together in the one perfect Word of God. How simple this theory, as compared with the complexity of the other!

But, we are told, this theory is contrary to the facts of the case. We have endeavoured to show that there is no reason for this statement. And we are not ashamed of the band we belong to when we take this position. Our opponents themselves acknowledge that 'the glorious

company of the Apostles' are with us; and if we take His words in their natural meaning, we may add that the Lord of the Apostles is with us too. Practically, we have had the whole Christian Church for eighteen centuries on our side. So it was until about twenty years ago; and even now the majority of Christians, including many well-grounded scholars, and a large host of devout Bible readers, hold to the old views. What giants of devout scholarship we have had in the Church of Christ, who have held the Bible to be true, as it stands, from beginning to end!

And what a large number of expositors there have been, belonging to various sections of the Church of Christ, who have been perfectly one in their hearty and absolute submission to the whole Bible. Be it remembered that they had all the facts before them which we have at this day. The new Pentateuchal theory does not rest on archæological discovery; it rests on the contents of the Hebrew Bible, which was in the hands of the scholars of former generations as much as in our own. Some of the arguments which are now being pressed, in regard to the historicity of Daniel and the authorship of the Pentateuch, are very old; they were known to these old scholars, and rejected by them.

Not only ministers of the Church, but Christian scholars in other positions also have intelligently



held fast to the old views. Many distinguished lawyers, men who were specially skilled in the law of evidence, felt that the facts warranted their absolute trust in the Bible as it stands. We give the testimony of Lord Hatherley, who was Lord Chancellor of England about thirty years ago. He knew the old objections; De Wette, Ewald, and Wellhausen's precursor Graf were his contemporaries; he had lived through the times when Colenso had argued about the Pentateuch on somewhat similar lines to those of the 'critics,' had caused a tremendous excitement in the Church, and had passed into oblivion; all in the course of about a dozen years. And yet, in August, 1875, Lord Hatherley wrote in regard to his wife and himself: 'To-day we have just finished our reading of the Bible together *for the forty-fourth time*. In my old age I begin so immensely to prefer the Bible to all good books of what kind soever. It is always new; at least we always find something new that escaped our observation at the last reading. And how wonderfully independent it is of a various reading here or a mistaken translation there, being the whole that it is, a living whole that is and will be spirit and life till time shall be no more. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." Such is the estimate of the Bible formed by this eminent, cultured Christian, after reading it so

often for so many years; his estimate of the Bible *just as it is*, and as our Lord and His Apostles understood it, with all the facts bearing on the subject before him which scholars of the present day have.

In view of this, then, what advice shall we give to the plain Christian man who wants to know the truth on the subject we have been discussing? We conclude as we began this discussion with the one fundamental point, in regard to this as to all other matters. If you want to know *the truth*, cling fast to THE TRUTH,<sup>1</sup> that is, to Christ. Believe what He believed, reject what He rejected, and you will not go wrong. There is a striking alteration made by our English revisers in 2 John 9. 'Whosoever *goeth onward* and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.' It is wrong to run away from Christ, it is wrong to lag behind Christ, and it is equally wrong to *go ahead* of Christ; and this is what those 'critics' do who say, 'Christ followed mistaken Jewish ideas, which we have escaped from'; they 'go onward, and abide not in the teaching of Christ.' If we act on the principle of believing all that we learn from the words of Christ that He believed, then we shall not go wrong. And we may also keep our

Practical  
conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 6.

hearts in perfect peace, in regard to the ultimate issue of the discussion which is now going on. Whatever statement is contrary to the teaching of Christ is untrue, and therefore never will be established, however many and however learned may be the people who advocate it. Whatever statement is not inconsistent with the teaching of Christ will not impugn His authority, whether we receive the statement as true or not. Whatever is really in accord with His teaching is true, and the sooner it is believed the better.

Let us have no fear as to the ultimate issue, however many and however learned may be those who advocate views which are not in thorough accord with Christ's teaching, and which are not based on solid facts. Scores of popular false beliefs have vanished, and all such beliefs will vanish in time. They may now seem to stand as firm as Babylon did, but the time will come when they will have to come down from their pedestal, and the shades of other departed theories will mockingly cry, 'Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?'<sup>1</sup>

To those who do not feel any difficulty in receiving the Bible as it stands, without any reconstruction, just as our Lord and the Apostles did, we would say, Continue so to receive it, as

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xiv. 10.

the 'Scripture that cannot be broken.' Do not trouble yourself with the opinions of those who do feel a difficulty; leave them to solve their own doubts, but do not perplex yourself about a difficulty which you yourself are not conscious of. If your house suits you well, do not trouble yourself with the thought that you ought to reconstruct it. If, however, you wish to investigate these new views, then do so prayerfully and carefully. Pray to Christ for His Spirit's guidance to lead you into the truth and to keep you from error. Then 'prove all things,'<sup>1</sup> do not jump to conclusions, test everything you read. We have learnt by experience how many unguarded statements and weak reasonings there are in many 'critical' books—very possibly there are the same on the other side also. Hence, in reference to writings on both sides, let every Scripture passage quoted be carefully scanned, with its context, and let each sweeping statement be examined, to see if it has any authority, and each conclusion to see if it really follows from the premisses. Then note carefully, in regard to each conclusion, whether it is positive or only probable. If it is only probable, then hold it only provisionally, knowing that new discoveries may any day change the balance of probability.

So much as to the matter of holding right

• <sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 21.

opinions; but let us close with the important point of spirit and character. Christian men differ in opinion on the points we have been discussing, but when we differ let it always be *in love*. In Rom. xiv. the Apostle Paul refers to two classes of Christians who differed in opinion, the first party condemned the second as doing wrong, the second despised the first as old-fashioned and weak-minded. The Apostle urges the first not to judge the second, and the second not to set at nought the first, but all alike to remember that those on both sides are servants of the one Lord, to whom they stand or fall. These words may apply to us; some of us may be in danger of condemning our brother as being necessarily unfaithful to Christ because of the new opinions he holds, and this latter brother is in danger of despising the man who condemns him as an old-fashioned 'traditionalist' who is quite behind the times. Let us rather honour and love one another, believing that we each seek to serve faithfully our common Lord. And let us remember another word of the same great Apostle, 'whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk.'<sup>1</sup> The two parties of believers differ in opinion about a certain part of the Bible; but we all agree in, and highly value, the main teaching of the Old Testament, and we all rest with our

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 16.

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whole heart on the one Gospel of the New Testament. Let us all see to it that our one principle is to follow Christ, believe His words, and do His will, and live in love with all men, especially with those who are one with us in Christ.

## APPENDIX A

### Archæological Discovery

THE *Bombay Guardian*, for June 13, 1903, contains the following extract:—

‘Professor Kittel, of Leipsic, the present occupant of the chair held by the elder Delitzsch, has recently published a pamphlet in which he maintains that the Biblical basis has been vastly strengthened, not weakened, by the excavations in the Tigris and Euphrates valleys. We quote the following from a translation made for the *Literary Digest*:—

‘In the light of the lessons of history, there need be no fear but that the eventual outcome of the Assyriological and Babylonian finds will add to the dignity and claims of the Scriptures. A little more than a generation ago it was regarded as the essence of critical and historical wisdom to discredit the story of the siege and even of the existence of Troy. When a plain layman, Schliemann, undertook with spade and pick to hunt for the evidence of the historical character of Homer’s epic, he was ridiculed most thoroughly by the official representatives of classical lore. But the overwhelming evidence unearthed by Schliemann turned this ridicule into warm commendation.

‘Again, it was at that time almost an axiom among philologists that there was no such

historical character as Minos. Now the palace and throne of that great king have been unearthed in Crete. Even King Midas, of Phrygia, was declared to be a myth; now the Assyrian inscriptions have told us that he was one of the great kings of the eighth pre-Christian century. Everywhere and in every direction the darkness of earliest Greek history has been lifted, and the same is becoming true of the Orient.

The evidences that the excavations in Bible lands have brought forth already justify the expectation that the skilfully reconstructed subjective history of Israel, as taught by the modern school, will have to be in all of its essentials unlearned again. Some years ago the great Ewald uttered the pronouncement that the names of the patriarchs were not those of historical characters, but of certain tribes, and that the story of the patriarchs was the later history of later generations projected into the earlier ages. Indeed, none of the earlier records of the Old Testament were regarded as historically reliable, since the evidence for the existence of writing at so early an age could not be furnished. The fact that in the days of the Judges and of Saul (which were regarded as the earliest "historical" period in Israel) the civilisation and religion of Israel were at a low ebb was regarded as conclusive evidence that before that period there could not have been a higher state of culture. These are substantially the views of the advanced school at the present day. Now comes the spade of the Assyriologist and brings to the light of day data that stand in bold contrast to these conclusions. The search for evidence of a low state of culture in the earliest period has been in vain; the very opposite was the case. Whatever the excavator finds shows a higher and



higher condition in this respect. From the earliest pre-Semitic period of Babylon, we possess Sûmariian finds of exceptional beauty, dating back to the fourth pre-Christian millennium. Hilprecht has found two bronze gazelle heads from this time that will compare favourably with the best productions of modern art. The later period of Babylonian civilisation never attained to the state of the earliest in this regard.

‘All this shows that the hypothesis as to the crude civilisation of earliest Israel cannot be maintained in the light of historical parallels. The age of the Judges was evidently a period of decay, and was preceded by one of higher and deeper culture, as is depicted in the Old Testament. This is further evidenced by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, that prove the existence of literature, and a high degree of culture, in Palestine and the surrounding countries as early as 1400 B.C. In the light of these facts, it would be remarkable, not if Israel had a literature as early as the days of Moses, but if it had not had.

‘Even in smaller details, the cuneiform finds confirm the older statements of the Scriptures. The wedging in of smaller nomadic tribes into old civilised districts is now known to have been of frequent occurrence, and the story of the patriarchs, to whom these things are ascribed, is accordingly in harmony with historical parallels. Indeed, in so far as actual facts have been gleaned from these diggings, these have only helped and not harmed genuine Biblical research.’

The *Expository Times*, of July, 1902, contains the following:—

‘Professor König is no traditionalist or apologist, yet he finds it necessary to utter some cautions against treating everything that is

cuneiform as therefore bearing the stamp of absolute truth. For instance, these records are, at least in a great many cases, not the originals, but copies—often long removed from the archetypes. Nor can we be always certain that the narrative is unwarped by prejudices and partialities, leading now to invention, and at other times to suppression of the truth (e.g., Sennacherib's silence about the disaster that compelled him to retreat from Judah in 701 B.C.). From this point of view it is shown that the advantage lies on the side of the Hebrew records, although in such a minor point as chronological exactitude the superiority belongs to Babylon.'

In his recent book, *The First Bible*, Col. Conder makes the following statements:—

'A statement on brick or stone is not of necessity more true than one on paper. . . . A monumental statement, again, may be either contemporary or it may refer to a remote past. In the latter case, it may only represent tradition, and may not be credible. . . . If there be a discrepancy between the statements of a Hebrew writer and those of an Assyrian scribe, we have no right to assume that the Hebrew account is the less reliable. It is a question to be impartially studied. It is unscientific, on the one hand to reject Hebrew chronology, and at the same time to assume that Nabonahid, king of Babylon, knew certainly the dates 3,200 years before his own time, when we have no catena [chain] of chronology to show that he was correct. Scepticism as to ancient statements may easily be carried too far; but when it is expressed, it should be extended to the statements of late Babylonians as well as of early Hebrews. Archæology may gather much from the incidental notes in the Bible, and authority demands at

least equal confirmation when a statement is found on monuments and when it is preserved in the Old Testament. . . . The Babylonian chronology is not carried by any catena of evidence, farther back than 2250 B.C., while in Egypt there is no monumental chronology at all. It is rash, therefore, to assert that monumental information disagrees with the Old Testament. . . . The various theories as to the date of Menes, in Egypt, differ by twenty-three centuries ; and they are founded, not on any monumental statement, since there are no dates appended to the lists of Egyptian kings on monuments, but on Manetho, who lived about 250 B.C., as his lists are preserved by Eusebius in the fourth century A.D., and by George the Syncellus, author of the *Chronographia*, in the ninth century A.D. The statements so obtained, second-hand, are not in accord with the monuments as to dates or names.' Pp. 146-154.

## APPENDIX 'B

### The Imprecatory Psalms

**I**N his volumes on the Psalms in *The Expositor's Bible*, Dr. Maclaren writes as follows:—

‘It is easy for those who have never lived under grinding, godless tyranny, to reprobate the exultation of the oppressed at the sweeping away of their oppressors; but if the critics had seen their brethren set up as torches to light Nero’s gardens, perhaps they would have known some thrill of righteous joy when they heard that he was dead.’ (Ps. lii.)

‘There is an ignoble, and there is a noble and Christian satisfaction in even the destructive providences of God. . . . It is no unworthy shout of personal vengeance, nor of unfeeling triumph, that is lifted up from a relieved world when Babylon falls. If it is right in God to destroy, it cannot be wrong in His servants to rejoice that He does. Only they have to take heed that their emotion is untarnished by selfish gratulation, and is not untinted with solemn pity for those who were indeed doers of evil, but were themselves the greatest sufferers from their evil.’ (Ps. lvi.)

‘It is far better to recognise the discordance between the temper of the psalmist and that enjoined by Christ than to try to cover it over. Our Lord Himself has signalled the difference

between His teaching and that addressed to "them of old time," on the very point of forgiveness of enemies, and we are but following His guidance when we recognise that the psalmist's mood is distinctly inferior to that which has now become the law for devout men.

'Divine retribution for evil was the truth of the Old Testament, as forgiveness is that of the New. . . . Devout men could not but long for the triumph of that with which all good was associated, and therefore for the defeat and destruction of its opposite. For no private injuries, or for these only in so far as the suffering singer is a member of the community which represents God's cause, does he ask the descent of God's vengeance, but for the insults and hurts inflicted on righteousness. The form of these maledictions belongs to a lower stage of revelation; the substance of them, considered as passionate desires for the destruction of evil, burning zeal for the triumph of truth, which is God's cause, and unquenchable faith that He is just, is a part of Christian perfection. (Ps. cix.)

'Perhaps if some of their modern critics had been under the yoke from which this psalmist has been delivered, they would have understood a little better how a good man of that age could rejoice that Babylon was fallen and all its race extirpated. Perhaps it would do modern tender-heartedness no harm to have a little more iron infused into its gentleness, and to lay to heart that the King of Peace must first be King of Righteousness, and that Destruction of evil is the complement of Preservation of Good.' (Ps. cxxxvii.)

## APPENDIX\* C

### The Book of Daniel

THERE are a few minor objections to the historicity of Daniel, which it did not seem worth while mentioning in the text, but we may briefly refer to them in the Appendix. It is maintained that there was no such expedition of Nebuchadnezzar as that referred to in Dan. i. 1. Dr. Driver says that it 'is doubtful' whether it took place; and he thinks it improbable (Cam. Bib. on Daniel i. 1). This implies that it is *possible* that it took place; and in ordinary life the 'improbable' has a knack of happening; as we know from the common phrase that 'truth is stranger than fiction.'

It is said that the word 'Chaldean,' in the sense of magician, could not have been used in the time of Daniel. We reply that it is not certain that this statement is correct, that the portion of the book which is written in the third person may have been written some time after Daniel's death, and may yet be a true narrative; that the writer certainly uses the word in the usual national sense (Dan. v. 30, ix. 1); and that a word is often in use in a wider and in a narrower sense at the same time.

It is said that the statement that the 'Chaldeans' spoke 'in the Syrian [*i.e.*, Aramaic]

language' (ch. ii. 4) is incorrect. The reply is that the word 'Aramaic' here probably refers, not to the language spoken by the 'Chaldeans,' but to the fact that here begins the Aramaic portion of the book. Dr. Driver accepts this as probable.

It is said that it is very improbable that a strict Jew like Daniel would permit himself to be initiated into the class of the 'Chaldeans.' The reply is that it would be equally improbable, on the 'critical' theory, for a strict Jew of the time of Antiochus to represent his hero as having done so, in writing a fictitious narrative in which he is free to present his hero in the best light.

There is an important tablet which has been discovered of late years, and which records the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. One sentence in it has been translated 'the wife of the king died,' 'the king died,' or 'the son of the king died.' Dr. Pinches, of the British Museum, an eminent archæologist, maintains that the first rendering is inadmissible, and that the last is the most probable, and other scholars agree with him. He writes: 'Of course, whether we read, "and the king died," or "and the son of the king died," it comes to the same thing, as either expression could refer to Belshazzar, who, after his father's flight, would naturally be at the head of affairs.' In an article on *Belshazzar* in the new edition of *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, Dr. Pinches writes: 'It is therefore at least probable that Belshazzar was regarded even by the Babylonians as king, especially after his father's surrender. With this improved rendering of the Babylonian text, it is impossible to do otherwise than identify Gobryas with Darius the Mede.'

Another archæologist, Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, in speaking of Darius the Mede, says: 'Here we have an exact parallel to the case of Gobryas. . . .

He [Gobryas] is appointed "prefect of the prefects"; and he appoints other prefects over the kingdom. . . . He seems to me to fulfil in every way the required conditions to be Darius the Mede. . . . The appointment of the satraps does not seem exorbitantly large, nor are these to be confounded with the satrapies of the Persian empire.'

Dr. Driver, in his *Daniel* (p. 60), writes:—

'After Gubaru and Cyrus had entered Babylon . . . he (Belshazzar) is said (according to the most probable reading) to have been slain by Gubaru "during the night," i.e. (apparently) in some assault made by night upon the fortress or palace to which he had withdrawn.'

Col. Conder (*The First Bible*, p. 189) says: 'It is clear, therefore, that between the capture of Nabonahid (father of Belshazzar) at E-CI, and the final assault within Babylon, a period of more than three months elapsed, during which Belshazzar was practically king in his beleaguered city, until the final assault took place. His father . . . was a captive in the hands of Cyrus, and had failed to regain the city, where Belshazzar was actual ruler for three months or more.'

With regard to the musical instruments, Col. Conder writes (p. 37):—

'The famous criticism founded on the names of three instruments noticed in the same passage (Dan. iii. 5), which were supposed to be Greek words, was long ago traversed by F. Lenormant, on the ground that the fourth instrument—in Greek *sambuke*—was acknowledged to be of Syrian origin. Dr. Driver has recently repeated this criticism, which, he says, "demands" the conclusion that the passage is as late as the time of the Seleucidæ (second century B.C.). If he had considered "Grimm's law" he would hardly have suggested the Italian *sampogna* ("bagpipes")



to be derived from the Greek *symphonia*. The fact is that the Greeks borrowed most of their civilisation from Asia, including, as it is admitted, the musical instrument called *sabbeke* in Aramaic. The three famous words, *kaithros*, *psanterin*, and *sumphonia*, were known to Greeks in the forms *kitharis*, harp; *psalterion*, lyre; and *sumphonia* (at a very late period), bagpipes. The first two, at least, have no Greek etymology, nor are any of the three Semitic words. But the harp was known to the Hittites by 2000 B.C., and the bagpipes were ancient in Asia. A Jewish writer, in any age, would thus be unlikely to use Greek names for such instruments. All three words are probably Akkadian; *kat-arus* (hand-string), *pa-sanatar-na* (sound of four tight strings), and *sum-pan* (skin-sound), being in each case appropriate explanations of the terms.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. C. H. H. Wright, in *Criticism criticised*,<sup>1</sup> p. 111, writes:—

‘A careful examination of the historical details given in chapter xi. tends to show that no inconsiderable portion of it is a paraphrase, or Targum, of a genuine prophecy of Daniel, translated from the Aramaic. That paraphrase, like other Targums, incorporates large portions of the original prophecy, the conclusion from verse 30 on to the end being a simple transcript without note or comment of the original document.

‘Such a Targum, giving a concise account of the prophecies of Daniel respecting the Grecian era, and their remarkable fulfilment up to the date of its compilation, was sorely needed in the

<sup>1</sup> This book contains a number of addresses, criticising the modern ‘criticism,’ delivered in 1902 at a meeting of the Bible League at Oxford, and published by the League (186, Aldersgate Street, London) for one shilling. The editor is Dr. Wace, Dean of Canterbury. \*

Maccabean period to revive the languishing zeal of the Jews, and to fan it into a blaze. Never was there a time at which the very existence of the Jewish religion seemed so to hang upon so slender a thread.

'In proof of the probability of such an hypothesis, it may be noted that explanatory notes of a similar character occur in early portions of the Old Testament; and similar notes are actually found in MSS. of the Peshitto or Syriac translation of the Book of Daniel. In those MSS. they are generally interwoven with the text, and written in red ink.'

## APPENDIX D

[In regard to the use in the Pentateuch of the masculine for the feminine third personal pronoun, the following points should be noted.]

ON the critical theory what we have to believe is this.<sup>1</sup> Some time after the days of Solomon two men, J and E, each prepared a history of their people; in course of time a third person, J E, combined the two into one narrative. About the time of Josiah a fourth person compiled Deuteronomy. A century or two later a fifth person, P, wrote another history. A sixth person made the whole into a narrative comprising the books from Genesis to Joshua. Most 'critics' believe there were also revisions, one or more, of the book, in whole or in part. At least six, very likely a

<sup>1</sup> This book is addressed to the Christian public generally, not only to scholars, and in the text we therefore single out the peculiar use of 'he' for 'she.' But it will be well to state the facts more exactly. In Hebrew, as in Latin, the personal pronouns are seldom expressed, being implied in the person of the verb, and in Hebrew also in its gender. And, in both languages, the same word is useful for the third personal and for the demonstrative pronoun. *Hû* in Hebrew thus corresponds to *ille* in Latin. It is used in the Pentateuch for the feminine 190 times, sometimes as a personal and sometimes as a demonstrative pronoun. In the former case it means 'she,' and in this sense it occurs in several places. In Genesis it is thus used fifteen times. Where it is used as a demonstrative pronoun its presence does not seem so absurd as where

dozen, persons had a hand in the production of the book. Every one of these lived at a time when for centuries the use of the words 'she' and 'lass' had been universal. The book is written in good Hebrew, in some parts the style is very beautiful; yet in the resultant book, in the great bulk of cases, 'he' is used for 'she,' and 'lad' for 'lass.' It would sound to the people of the time in which it was issued somewhat as if a memoir of Queen Victoria began thus: 'Queen Victoria was born in 1819; he was the daughter of the Duke of Kent. After the death of her father the lad was brought up by her mother.' The book actually contains the following sentences, as they would sound to the people who read or heard it. 'And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because *he* was the mother of all living.'<sup>1</sup> 'The Egyptians beheld the woman that *he* was very fair.' 'Why saidst thou, *He* is my sister?'<sup>2</sup> 'Said he not himself unto me, *He* is my sister? and *he* even, *he* said, He is my brother.' '*He* is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, and *he* became my wife.'<sup>3</sup> 'And the *lad* ran

'he' stands for 'she,' but it is still ungrammatical, and is therefore little likely to be used by late writers; just as it is exceedingly unlikely, we may say it is impossible, that such anomalies as *ille mulier* or *ce femme* would frequently occur in the writings of a good Latin or French author. Where in the text we put 'he' for 'she' the phrase is meant to include also the ungrammatical use of the masculine demonstrative pronoun for the feminine. On the critical theory books written in good Hebrew, the product of many minds, contain 190 cases of what, at the time of the writers, would be considered glaring grammatical mistakes; which further, where the word is a personal pronoun, is grotesquely absurd; as, for instance, where it is said of Rebekah, '*he* was barren,' and '*he* is my sister' (Gen. xxv. 21, xxvi. 7).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xii. 14, 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xx. 5, 12.

and told her 'mother's house.'<sup>1</sup> 'And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife because *he* was barren.'<sup>2</sup> 'He knew not that *he* was his daughter-in-law.'<sup>3</sup> 'The lad and her mother.'<sup>4</sup>

This seems very extraordinary, and there is yet another strange thing. The whole book may be called a narrative in six chapters, Joshua following Deuteronomy as naturally as Exodus follows Genesis. But the compiler, after using 'he' in nineteen cases out of twenty in the first five chapters, suddenly drops it altogether in the sixth chapter (Joshua), where the word 'she' frequently occurs.

The whole thing seems absolutely incredible, yet this is what the 'critical' theory naturally involves. This seems implied in the last sentence of the treatment of *hu* in the Oxford Hebrew Lexicon, which gives the following explanation of the phenomenon, that probably 'it originated at a comparatively late epoch in the transmission of the text, perhaps in connection with the assumption, which is partly borne out by facts, that in the older language feminine forms were more sparingly used than subsequently.'

It is difficult to conceive a more grotesque idea than this, that a man should deliberately take an important and well-known book, and in the first five chapters almost uniformly put 'he' for 'she,' while leaving 'she' in the sixth chapter. If this were done with the New Testament, Luke i. 28, 29, would run thus: 'And the angel came in unto her and said. . . . And when *he* saw him *he* was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind,' etc.; and we should have 'he' alone used up to the end of the Gospel of John, and 'she' used all

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxiv. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xxxviii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. xxii. 15.

through the Book of Acts. Yet this is the only explanation which all the learning of the compilers of the lexicon has to give in regard to an undoubted Pentateuchal fact.

It will be noted that the latest and best Hebrew dictionary, brought out by 'critics,' acknowledges that the use of the masculine form for the feminine probably suits the 'older language.' It therefore follows that the 'traditional' view, which holds that the peculiarity under consideration is an archaism, and that consequently the Pentateuch was written before the other books of the Bible, is a natural explanation of the facts of the case.



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